A QUALITATIVE RESEARCH ON HIGHER EDUCATION MEDIA EDUCATION IN
BEIJING: FROM EIGHT PROFESSORS AND PROFESSIONALS' PERSPECTIVES

by

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Abstract

This research aims to examine university level media education in Beijing, China. The purpose is to improve the curriculum and pedagogy of media education at the university level. This qualitative research is designed to explore "what are the values and beliefs underpinning higher education media education curriculum in Beijing, China?" More precisely, based on conducting semi-structured interviews with eight participants, three sub-research questions were identified and explored: (a) what are the values and beliefs of theory underpinning media education curriculum in Beijing, China; (b) what are the values and beliefs of practice underpinning media education curriculum in Beijing, China; (c) what might the underpinning values and beliefs be in Chinese media education in the future? This study endeavors to provide a holistic view of present media education curriculum and pedagogy in Beijing. The hope is that it might develop thoughtful views of theory and practice learning in media education and contribute toward a framework of what media education could be.

Preface

This dissertation is an original intellectual product of the author, Ge Shi. Ethics approval was required for the research and approved by the UBC Behavioural Research Ethics Broad (BREB) on May 25th, 2015. The BRBE number is H15-01072.

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1 Introduction

There is a television in my family home that is older than I am. My parents told me they bought it when they first got married. During that time, having a television was of the utmost importance for newlyweds, because it already had become the primary mode for them to get information. When I married, about three years ago, we also bought a television. However, now, for us, television has been relegated far from the most important mode of information transmission. We have, between the two of us, three computers, three smartphones and one iPad. Within the last 30 years of the development of the media industry, people living in China enjoy a multitude of ways of sharing information and spreading ideas (Scotton & Hachten, 2010). Although the technology changes, the importance of media never changes.

With the development of media techniques, people can select the most appropriate media to achieve more effective communication, as my husband and I have done. Both old media (refers to the traditional means of communication, for example, newspaper, TV and radio) and new media (refers to the interactive ways of digital communication, for example, the Internet) are continually improving to meet the needs of their users Media education has emerged with the commitment to foster media professionals in this field.

1.1 Research background

1.1.1 Personal experience

When I was a child, I wanted to be a storyteller and perform on a TV children's show. With this dream, I applied to enter the School of Media, majoring in Announcing and Anchoring Art. The curriculum that the school arranged for us was rich and broad. However, once I got into

some of the courses, they seem to not pin out as useful as I originally thought they would be. I became interested in curriculum and pedagogy after thinking about what courses I needed and what courses the school had arranged for us.

When I tried to find internships to gain experience in the real work of media organizations, I found I did not have the obvious superiority when I was compared with other graduates who came from other majors. For example, I worked as an assistant producer in a TV program about aspects of law. Compared with the those who majored in Law, I lacked of that knowledge. This became an obstacle for me to understand the program topic and to collect related information. Compared with others working there who majored in media technology, I lacked the practice of using both media software and media equipment. More precisely, compared with people who majored in media technology, my disadvantage included three aspects: (1) I only knew the rough steps of making a video, having used the most popular, and free software; (2) I could not solve some of the technique problems on my own; (3) I could not use the technology creatively. I struggled during my internship, and I kept asking myself what had I learned in media education and what could I do for the media industry. The answers looked like a puzzle to me.

Based on the challenges that I faced in that experience, I am interested in curriculum design in media education to solve those problems and am eager to search for greater understandings. I designed this research to investigate how media professors and professionals look at the current media education curriculum in Chinese higher education. Through interviewing people from different spheres of the media industry, this research endeavors to uncover the values and beliefs underpinning the Chinese higher education media education

curriculum.

1.1.2 Theoretical background

Media education is "expected to train ethical media professionals, which would contribute to build a healthy environment" (Lee, 2010, p.10). It includes "learning media-related knowledge, conducting media-related practices, and fostering talents for media organizations" (Kong, 2015, p.59). In China, media education means the collective idea of Journalism and other media-related areas in education, such as program editing, anchoring and photographing. Yao (2005) specifically mentions that media education could be understood as a kind of education that concerns itself with "multimedia information broadcasting processes and practices" (p. 58), which includes the interaction among "communicator, channels, media organizations and audiences" (p. 58). In the current Chinese educational system, media education only exists at the higher education level (Yao, 2005). Media education at the university level, especially undergraduate, is research focused. The intent of this thesis is to review the current higher education media education prevailing in Beijing, China.

Beijing, China's capital, is a hub that connects national politics, economy and culture. Among the 100 key universities in China, 26 of them are in Beijing. Also, a great number of commercial media organizations that include many major social media platforms have their headquarters in Beijing. Almost all of the national, non-commercial media organizations were established in Beijing. The decision to carry out the research for this thesis in Beijing was an obvious one because of this milieu.

An important point to know about Media education in higher education is that it is not standardized throughout China. Media-related curriculums vary among universities in Beijing.

For example, Beijing Normal University (BNU) has two media-related faculties: the Faculty of Arts and Media and the Faculty of Journalism and Communication. In BNU, there are seven majors under the Faculty of Media and Arts, including Film and TV Media, Music, Dance, Calligraphy, Fine Arts and Design, and Digital Media Arts. In the Faculty of Journalism and Communication there is one main discipline of Journalism and communication. In Renmin University of China (RUC), the Department of Journalism, which is in the Faculty of Social Science, is separated from Arts. Tsinghua University (TU) and Peking University (PU) both use the same faculty title: Faculty of Journalism and Communication. However, their curriculum designs differ. Examining the undergraduate curriculum in media education of PU from 2014 to 2015, courses included, among others, the study of: advertising, history of press communication, TV program design, reporting, cross-cultural study, broadcasting and public relations. On Tsinghua University's website, it is pointed out that 50% of the curriculum is professional and 50% is Liberal Arts, Social Science and cross-disciplinary learning. Media education in China is complicated, comprehensive and broad (Wang, 2013; Yao, 2005; Dai, 2010; Liu, 2011; Tian, Yang & Chen, 2014).

The media industry in Beijing has developed rapidly, and at the same time, the number of students headed towards becoming media professionals has also increased dramatically (Wang, 2013; Chen, 2013; Kong, 2015). However, the non-standardized curriculum setting (Li & Yang, 2010; Yang, 2013; Wang, 2012; Chen, Yang and Tian, 2014; Kong, 2015) indicates a lack of clarity in the overall Chinese media education in higher education. Conceivably, there is a need for some changes and development to take place in this new and exciting realm of higher education in China.

1.2 Research questions

Mentioned here briefly is the idea that media in China has been described as the "party organs" (Scotton & Hachten, 2010, p.21). In the other words, the Communist party uses the media to accomplish certain tasks. This shows the importance of the media in promoting what the party wants the people to know. Media editors have to "balance the political sensitivities of China's government leaders with demands of readers, listeners, viewers, and advertisers" (Scotton & Hachten, p.23). Lee (2010) mentioned that forms of media "constitute a real environment which conditions thought and determines behavior" (p.2). The content within a particular society's media is influenced by its social, cultural and political background. However, this work will not critique the influences of those factors in China that are behind its media education and industry. Rather, this work attempts to develop a clear understanding of China's current university level media education, and offer an examination of possible modifications to the current media education under the prevailing social environment.

There have been many studies written about Chinese media education in higher education, especially since 2000 (Xu, 2009; Li & Yang, 2010; Zhang, 2011; Wang, 2012; Wang, 2013; Tian, Yang and Chen, 2014, Kong, 2015). In examination of the previous research, two problems seem to appear; one being in discipline setting and the other in educational orientation. Most of the previous works have discussed whether higher education media education in China should be considered academic studies or skills training. Lee (2008) holds the view that providing both academic knowledge and professional skill should be the nature of such media-related programs such as Journalism, Anchoring, Photography, Film and Programming. According to Lee, "The curriculum design for both domains always needs to strike a balance

between 'theory and practices'" (p. 59).

1.2.1 Research questions

The goal of this qualitative research is to understand, identify and explore the question: "What are the values and beliefs underpinning the higher education media education curriculum in Beijing, China?" To this end, the guiding research questions are: (a) what are the values and beliefs of theory underpinning media education curriculum in Beijing, China; (b) what are the values and beliefs of practice underpinning media education curriculum in Beijing, China; (c) What might the underpinning values and beliefs be in Chinese media education in the future?

To explore these questions, this research to closely examine the current higher education media education curriculum and pedagogy in Beijing. University professors and others involved in media academia and industry were invited to participate in one-on-one, face-to-face, semi-structured interviews. It is hoped that this research might promote a more holistic view of media education in Beijing than what currently exists. Furthermore, it might contribute towards a framework of what media education could be.

1.2.2 Paper organization

I situate this study in relation to theoretical concepts of media and media education. I point out first, different understandings of media under different circumstances showing features of media within society. The implication of what kind of theory and practice are needed in higher education media education is assessed by analyzing how the functions and significance of media serve society. Then, various aspects of media education are explored, which include three parts: (a) discussing the meaning of media education in China; (b) synthesizing the missions and

purposes of higher education media education; (c) describing and analyzing the current Chinese media education situation, which is also connected with my own academic and professional experiences; and finally, (d) identifying concepts about practices and theories in current media curriculum and pedagogy.

In this thesis, the chapter containing the literature review provides a theoretical platform for my research. Based on the literature review, interview questions were prepared. The literature review controlled the direction of data collection; after the research, the literature review helped to orient the findings and conclusion. The chapter on research methodology depicts how the research was conducted. The chapters containing data analysis, findings and the conclusion present what I found, what I learned and what I project to do in the future.

1.3 Definition of terms (in Alphabetical order)

Breadth course - Breadth course refers to the courses that students must complete outside their individual major program. The courses mainly involve the disciplines of the humanities, social science and natural science. Based on the "Proposal for New Breadth Requirement", published by the Arts & Science Faculty Council, University of Toronto, we can see that the purposes of the required Breadth courses are to encourage students "to explore new and different analytical and critical methods, in order to foster a broad understanding of the foundational concepts and approaches found in various areas of intellectual investigation", "to think critically about disciplinary boundaries", and "to appreciate the nature of interdisciplinary research" (2009, p.1). Completing Breadth courses is one of the requirements for Bachelor's degree.

Cross-disciplinary - Cross-disciplinary learning means the study of more than one

discipline at the university level.

Low-threshold – The term low-threshold, in this research, relates to the fact that it is easy to acquire the professional skills needed for use in the media industry. Based on research data, one participant concluded that anyone could become a professional in the media industry with no more than two months' training.

Media - Media has many meanings when it is translated into Chinese. For example, media stands for the objects that convey and broadcast visual and audio information, as well as meaning the organization or system that conducts mass communication practices (Yao, 2005). "A medium is something we use when we want to communicate with people indirectly, rather than in person or by face-to-face contact" (Buckingham, p.3), including television, radio, Internet, and newspaper.

Media Education - In this research, media education is focused on media education in higher education, and is "expected to train ethical media professionals, which would contribute to build a healthy environment" (Lee, 2010, p.10). Media education includes "learning media-related knowledge, conducting media-related practices, and fostering talents for media organizations" (Kong, 2015). In China, media education means the collective idea of Journalism and other media-related areas of education. More precisely, Yao (2005) mentioned that media education could be understood as a kind of education that concerns itself with "multimedia information broadcasting processes and practices" (p. 58), which includes the interaction among "communicator, channels, media organizations and audiences" (p. 58). The current Chinese educational system within the current social backdrop places media education in the higher education design (Yao, 2005). To conclude, media education refers to the media-related

professional education given the School of Media, in China universities.

Project 211 – a project designated by the Chinese Ministry of Education that selected approximately 100 national key universities and colleges that would receive major governmental support. Among these selected key universities, there 26 are in Beijing. The professors who participated in this research came from these universities.

Vocational training & professional training - As Hanney (2013) says, media professional practice refers to an "extended training, a high standard of ethics, specialized knowledge and expertise" (p.45). In contrast, vocational training "provides trade skills for workers to earn a living" (Lee, 2008, p.59). In this research, the term vocational-oriented education is used to describe that the employment is final goal of higher education media education.

2 Literature Review

2.1 Media/Medium

Meyrowitz (1999) has provided three metaphorical descriptions to analyze media in detail. Firstly, "medium-as-conduit" (p.45) is the most common understanding, which focuses on the content in the process of broadcasting. Each medium connects the receiver and sender, transcending the limitations of physical geography (Scotton & Hachten, 2010). It also extends the dissemination of information. With this extension, the diversity of types of audiences' interpretations increases and at the same time, the broadening of the spread of information may also propel the study of processing various information (Meyrowitz). No one would deny that "the basic function of the media is to communicate – to convey ideas and information whether as public information (news), as entertainment, or diversion" (Scotton & Hachten, p.25).

Secondly, the metaphor of "medium-as-language" (Meyrowitz, 1999, p.46) guides people to pay attention to the "grammar" of media that refers to the expression format. Each medium has special grammar, relating to, for example, the different font styles and sizes in print media and Internet, and the varied angles and focuses of image in videos and still photographs. The grammar variables could stimulate people to consider the effects of information manipulation in the process of indirect communication (Meyrowitz).

Thirdly, "medium-as-environment" (Meyrowitz, 1999, p.48) points out that each medium may have a fixed broadcasting context that includes the messages types, communication approaches, forms of interaction, and physical requirements. For example, oral expression in a video or TV program is different from the written mode in a newspaper or magazine, with, for example, the latter always taking font types into consideration. Different from the study of

content and grammar variables, this metaphor guides people to analyze the determinate features of each medium system.

Interweaving the resultant meaning of these three descriptive metaphors with specific social and cultural backgrounds, demonstrates that media is a channel through which public opinion is influenced. Media provides the platform for the development of popular culture (Lin & He, 2006; Wang, 2012). Basic human behavior and social ethics may be fused in the processed media messages, which are included in the various media types, such as film, entertainment, TV programs and popular social-media websites, all of which may purposefully or unconsciously affect public values and attitudes. Also, media has been regarded as a main mean of individual learning (Lin & He). Included in this concept is that people in different geographical locations, of different age ranges, with differing socio-economic status, could do their learning through the media. Media's ability to handle enormous amounts of information and the convenience with which information can be obtained is a strong determinant that media is the best option to match most learners' needs (Lin & He, 2006; Guo & Hu, 2014; Scotton & Hachten, 2010; Lee, 2008).

"Media" has many meanings when it was translated into Chinese. For example, media stands for the objects that convey and broadcast visual and audio information, as well as meaning the organization or system that conducts the mass communication practices (Yao, 2005). In this research, media education is understood as a kind of education that concerns itself with "multimedia information broadcasting processes and practices" (p. 58), which includes the interaction among "communicator, channels, media organizations and audiences" (p. 58). In order to more and more effectively communicate, it seems that both information senders and their audiences need to develop certain abilities to send and receive information through media.

Media education emerges with the intent to discover how to foster those abilities (Yao).

2.2 Understanding Media Education

2.2.1 Definition of media education

Dickson (2000) explained the evolution of "media education". Before the 1920s, journalism education had become a discipline in universities in the United States, which targeted on cultivating newspaper and magazine journalists (Dickson, 2000). After the 1920s, journalism education started expanding to encompass many different subjects; and it has developed into "full-fledged journalism sequences" (p.34), which include advertising education, broadcast education, public relations education and speech education. Journalism education cannot cover all practices and theories in all of these media-related fields. According to Dickson's analysis, the words within the of the field of Journalism and Mass Communication "suggested a field with more than one focus" (p.167). "To some people, it means journalism versus the rest of field. To others, it means practical education versus theoretical education. Either way, it suggests a bifurcated field" (p. 167). He goes on to say, "Mass communication is seen by media educators who have a practical background as being theoretical and not practical" (p.167) and "Media studies, like Communication and Communication Studies" (p.168) also emphasize theories. He continues his critique, "Communication and Communication Studies are too broad for the field" (p.167). In conclusion, he states, "Mass Media Education and Media-related Education come closest to covering the range of activities comprising the field" (p.168).

Globally, many scholars study media education. Based on different social, cultural and educational backgrounds, media education, universally, is divided into two types - media

education at the K-12 levels and at the university level. Media education in Western context refers to educating children and youth to be more critical consumers and producers of media. It focuses on the K-12 level students. The main purpose is to develop young students' critical thinking or critical awareness (Buckingham, 2003; Donald, 1977; Lee, 2010; Chirist and Blanchard, 1993; Xu, 2009) and help them to actively and positively analyze, evaluate and process the information found in different mass media platforms. Currently, in China, there is no formal media-related curriculum for K-12 (Xu, 2009).

2.2.2 Definition of media education in China

In China, the term of media education describes courses for training media professionals at the university level. The current Chinese educational system within the current social backdrop places media education in the higher education design (Yao, 2005). Media education is "expected to train ethical media professionals, which would contribute to build a healthy environment" (Lee, 2010, p.10). It includes "learning media-related knowledge, conducting media-related practices, and fostering talents for media organizations" (Kong, 2015). In China, media education means the collective idea of journalism and other media-related realms of education, such as, program editing, anchoring, photographing. More precisely, Yao (2005) mentioned that media education could be understood as a kind of education that concerns itself with "multimedia information broadcasting processes and practices" (p. 58), which includes the interaction among "communicator, channels, media organizations and audiences" (p. 58).

The development of media education in higher education is still new in China, with the key theories and principles originally coming from the West (Kong, 2015; Lee, 2010; Xu, 2009). Media education only exists within the School of Media in universities and colleges. According

to related statistics, in 2009, there were 650 undergraduate students in media-related programs, in 360 colleges and universities throughout China (Scotton & Hachten, 2010). Since then, the number of students in media programs has increased in excess of ten times (Wang, 2013).

2.2.3 Missions and purpose of media education

The Communication University of China (CUC) is one of the universities chosen by the Chinese Ministry of Education to be in "Project 211" – a project designated by the Chinese Ministry of Education that selected about 100 national key universities and colleges that receive major governmental support. CUC is the best Chinese professional university in the field of media. The motto of CUC is "Integrity, professionalism, erudition and competence", which implies that these are the requirements of well-educated media professionals. Based on all the research that I have reviewed (Donald, 1977; Oregon Report, 1987; Bazalgette, 1992; Blanckard & Christ, 1993; Heafner, 1997; Sherman, 1997; Rubin & Rubin, 1997; Hanks & Ruminski, 1997; Christ, 1997; Dickson, 2000; Elliot, 2000; Yao, 2005; Finn, 2007; Lee, 2008; Melkote, 2008; Cheung, 2009; Xu, 2009; Dai, 2010; Li & Yang, 2010; Lee, 2010; Zhang, 2011; Liu, 2011; Wang, 2012; Blom & Davennport, 2012; Hanney, 2013; Telo, 2013; Yang, 2013; Tian, Yang and Chen, 2014; Kong, 2015;Tian, Liang & Zhao, 2015), I have summarized, below, six categories of media education with higher education missions, which include: Developing professional skills, fostering critical thinking, encouraging creative thinking, motivating continual learning, helping student expand their vision, and establishing media ethics.

(1) Developing professional skills

It can be seen by observing the development history of mass media that to work in the

media industry requires of the professionals a strong ability to operate the various parts of media. In Christ's book, *Media education assessment handbook*, he presents a synthesis of professional knowledge and skills in the Oregon Report ("Planning for curriculum change", 1987) and the Michigan Professional Preparation Network Report ("Strengthening the ties", 1988). There are various subcategories in the media industry, for example, anchoring, photography, video editing, and journalism. In addition, each career position requires different and special skills. For example, news writing and reporting are skills required of journalists (Blom & Davennport, 2012); an anchor mainly needs speaking skills and voice training. Albeit, each of them has different working requirements, there are some basic professional skills that all those in the media industry should have, such as media writing, information gathering, aesthetic sensibility (or visual literacy), professional identification (or an identified career position and understanding of professional missions), communication competence, management, and operation of the media and techniques (Oregon Report, 1987; Christ, 1997; Finn, 2007; Rubin &Rubin, 1997; Sherman, 1997; Dickson, 1997; Lee, 2010; Yang, 2013).

(2) Fostering critical thinking

Many scholars in media education emphasize that critical thinking is the basic ability that should be fostered in media education (Donald, 1977; Blanckard & Christ, 1993; Hanks & Ruminski, 1997; Dickson, 2000; Yao, 2005; Lee, 2008; Cheung, 2009; Li & Yang, 2010; Zhang, 2011; Hanney, 2013; Tian, Liang & Zhao, 2015). Christ (1997) collected definitions of critical thinking from ten scholars. In these authors' definitions, some key words or core meanings overlapped: critical thinking required that students have the ability to analyze, assess and process information "actively", "rationally" and "skillfully" (Hanks & Ruminski, 1997, p. 145-147) Also,

Blanckard and Christ (1993) supplemented two adverbs "logically and coherently" (p.15) to describe how to examine issues as a critical thinker. Tian, Liang and Zhao (2015) pointed out one learning model, that they referred to as "connection". It refers to that teachers and students put current slang views and news as the hub, and then establish a connection with all of the information and knowledge that they already have. This learning model may improve student's motivation to learn and stimulate them to become information seekers.

(3) Encouraging creative thinking

Creative thinking includes two aspects: creative designing (Melkote, 2008; Li & Yang, 2010; Buckingham, 2013; Yang, 2013; Telo, 2013), and "creative problem solving" (Melkote, 2008; Li & Yang, 2010; Hanney, 2013, p.46). Creative designing stresses the ability of innovation and flexibility, especially in this digital media era; and the core qualities required are students' curiosity, interest and responsibility (Yang, 2013). However, media is not an isolated individual practice. Buckingham (2013) discusses how to promote participation and creativity within the media industry. In a creative media community, a creative designer represents as a "participatory creator" (Telo, 2013, p.2314), which has been defined as "opening some decision-making processes to a loose collective of participants who gain recognition as practitioners through their engagement in a creative practice" (p.2314). Creative problem solving stresses the ability of "applying knowledge … in changing and difficult circumstances" (Hanney, p.46). "The act of solving the problem includes a process of analysis, evaluation and synthesis in order to determine how the solution could be best be implemented" (p.50) Creative problem solving challenges not only students' current knowledge and experiences, but also students' ability to use their knowledge and experiences adaptably. In China, scholars in media education recognize the

importance of improving students' creativity (Li & Yang, 2010; Wang, 2013; Yang, 2013). For

example, in 2008, authorized by the Chinese Ministry of Education, the School of Cinematic

Arts in CUC built a lab for media art training (Li & Yang, 2010).

(4) Motivating continual learning

"Motivation of continued learning is perhaps the most important attitudinal outcome for

students" (Christ, 1997, p.10). Wang (2013), upon examination of the job posts of the media

industry in North American and European countries; found that those working in the media

industry, in such positions as editor and journalist should continually renew their structure of

knowledge and skills system. Hanney (2013) mentions that "self-directive, creative and

innovative learners" are those "who, through an encounter with problems that challenge their

existing knowledge, ideas and briefs, are able to create new knowledge" (p.49). This new

knowledge is a composite of applying creativity and continued learning.

(5) Helping students expand their vision

Possessing an open mind and a broad vision are essential requisites for students who will

work in the media industry (Yang, 2013). Firstly, students should be able to systematically

organize their thinking about media (Bazalgette, 1992; Wang, 2013; Zhang, 2011). Buckingham

(2003) concluded four basic concepts of media education: "production, language, representation

and audience" (p. 23), while Bazalgette (1992) provided six: "agency, category, technology,

language, audience and representation" (p.202). These concepts may help students link their

current knowledge and objectives together, and further their grasp of their pursuit of media

professional practice (Bazalgette).

Secondly, media educators could build a bridge in academia to connect the flow of ideas between different disciplines (Blanchard & Christ, 1993). In many western universities, Breadth course are required for undergraduates. Breadth courses refer to the courses that students must complete their outside individual major program. Based on the "Proposal for New Breadth Requirement" that was published by the Arts & Science Faculty Council, University of Toronto, the purpose of Breadth courses are that they encourage students "to explore new and different analytical and critical methods, in order to foster a broad understanding of the foundational concepts and approaches found in various areas of intellectual investigation" (2009, p.1). Chinese media scholars Tian, Yang and Chen (2014) also mention that breadth courses target on the cultivation of an "integrated individual" who is not only a professional in one specific field but also a person endowed with a wide horizon, clear insight, spirit of liberal art education, and sound emotional development, strengthened through study of the humanities, natural sciences and social science. Media education does not mean "simply preparing people for occupations" (Blanchard & Christ, 1993, p. 103). Media education is a particular kind of integrated education (Liu, 2011). Dickson (2000) indicated, "in spite of the practical nature of media-related sequences and majors, media educators long have attempted to produce broadly educated practitioners by requiring that students be well grounded in liberal arts fields" (p. 126).

Thirdly, students should be able to integrate the concepts of culture, economy, society and politics, when making media products. "Any complex practice can be seen as a domain of social life" (Telo, 2013, p.2319); and "the world today is diverse, multicultural, and international in scope. The media professionals today should be capable and comfortable in dealing with the world" (Melkote, 2008, p. 71). Xu (2009) mentioned that "we cannot separate media education

from its political, economic, social and cultural contexts, where it gets rooted and takes effect" (p. 163). Because of the powerful voice that is given to them in this field, people who make media products should seriously consider how they influence the values and attitudes of the public.

(6) Establishing media ethics

"Professional ethics is an important outcome of media education" (Christ, 1997). Educators in each sub-category of media education must realize the importance of media ethics education. For example, Blom and Davenport (2012) designed a research project to find the most important core course in Journalism Education in the U.S. More than half of the teachers that were queried voted "Media Ethics & Law" as the most important course for students. Heafner (1997) held the view that "as people preparing for careers in some of the most culturally influential professions, students must be encouraged to develop moral character based on intertwining personal and professional values" (p.213). With the swift development of digital media, people are both media producers and consumers; establishing media ethics has become a personal responsibility, especially for those working in media, who are the direct media manipulators (Melkote, 2008; Lee, 2010). Also, in the process of education, moral development influences students' learning achievement, which is as important as teaching and learning style (Heafner, 1997).

In conclusion, higher education media education cannot merely focus on fostering expertise for a special field. Higher education media educators should pay attention also to the improvement of the broad-vision, independent insight, media ethics and aesthetics of their students, which promote both emotional and intellectual development (Tian, Yang and Chen,

2014).

2.3 Current situation of Chinese media education

In the 1980s, TV entered into Chinese people's lives, quickly followed by computer in the 1990s (Xu, 20009). In China, media education "is still a fairly new field, developing with the growth of the media industry" and focusing on higher education (Xu, 2009, p.157; Kong, 2015). The number of students in the school of media at universities increased 15 fold in ten years (Wang, 2013). Today, there are about thirty thousand students graduating from schools of media each year (Chen, 2013); however, only 25% of the students from media programs have gone on to work in media-related jobs in the media industry (Wang, 2013). Additionally, there are some professionals and instructors in media education who come from other majors beside Media, such as, Economics, Law, English and Computer Sciences (Zhang, 2011). With the growing number of enrolments in Chinese school of media, the challenges of media education obviously seem to be increasing.

Why have so many students been applying for media-related majors in China? As Wang (2013) and Kong (2015) analyzed, the lower scores that media-related majors received on the Chinese University Entrance Examinations (CUEE) appear to be a big reason. On the CUEE, media and arts majors must abide by a special examination rule: the exam is divided into two parts: the liberal arts examination that is held for all students in June, and a professional examination that is held by the Ministry of Education in individual universities independently for students who want to study media and arts majors. In general, the required score of the liberal arts examination for media and arts students is about two-thirds of general candidates' scores, if they aim to get into the same university with general candidates (Wang). When it comes to the

professional examination, the criteria are subjective and are not stable. Therefore, many students with low grades choose media and arts majors in order to get a diploma, which is regarded as the key to the gateway of society.

Are there enough teachers for the huge amount of media students? According to the requirements of the Ministry of Education, the minimum number of the teacher-student ratio is 1:18 (Wang, 2013). However, most of the media institutes cannot meet that requirement. This means more media teachers are sorely needed in higher education media education (Wang, 2013; Zhang, 2011; Xu, 2009; Yao, 2005). Also, among the media teachers, most have studied media theory, but lack hands-on practical experience in the field, which also has limited the quality of media education (Li & Yang, 2010; Zhang, 2011; Wang, 2012; Wang, 2013).

Are there any problems in media curriculum and pedagogy in China? Li and Yang (2010) and Kong (2015) mentioned two: firstly, the traditional large-class lecture hall set-up limits teaching being done in accordance with the students' aptitude; secondly, the fact that media professional training is fixed narrowly in the media field may mean that students have narrow vision. Although this enables students to focus on the specific skills within the media field, it limits the students' ability to explore their potential. As Yang (2013) explains, higher education media education is either purely theoretical or it was aimed at vocational training. This situation has contributed to the students graduating with less than excellent understanding of theories and non-professional practices. Similarly, Wang (2012) held the view that the purpose of media education has been inconsistent without a clear interpretation of what kinds of professions in the School of Media should be fostered. When I studied Announcing and Anchoring Art in the School of Media at my university, I found that there was no practice discussion in the theoretical

courses (Tian, Yang and Chen, 2014). The focus was on introduction courses, such as, Introduction to Media, Introduction to Journalism and Introduction to Arts; there were few courses offered in learning theory in practical courses that focused on vocational training, examples being: Mandarin Pronunciation, Non-linear Editing and Impromptu Oral Expression. In general, Chinese media educators are searching for approaches to balance theory and practice in media curriculum and pedagogy (Li & Yang, 2010; Wang, 2012; Yang, 2013; Tian, Liang & Zhao, 2015).

2.4 The practices and theories in media curriculum and pedagogy

2.4.1 Relationship between practice and theory

Whether the media curricula should be more theory or more skill-centered is argued among media educators. Dickson (2000) mentioned that a skill-oriented curriculum module may help students in the first job of their careers, while the theory-oriented curriculum model may help students to continue to advance to better positions within the media industry. The balance of theory and practice in curriculum does not just relate to technical aspects of the job. It is also concerned with fostering such qualities as professionalism, ethics, aesthetic and creativity, which are bound with societal values and attitudes towards society, culture, economy and politics. Many scholars have provided their approaches, in order to solve this problem (Oregon Report, 1987; Blanchard & Christ, 1997; Elliot, 2000; Dickson, 2000; Lee, 2008; Melkote, 2008; Wang, 2012; Hanney, 2013; Chen, 2013).

Theory and practice are not isolated from each other; however, some media educators separate them (Wang, 2012). Christ (1997) mentioned, "instead of being concerned with

distracting dichotomies, media educators should be discussing how we can broaden our students'

understanding through a variety of experiences including courses, symposia, practice, and

internship" (p.4). As Elliot (2000) analyzed that the dichotomy of: "theory is to do with the mind

and practice with hands" (p.27) – was never valid, "especially invalid in the case of media

production" (p.27). Practice and theory have not yet found an affiliated relationship in higher

education media education in China. For example, the principle that media theory guides media

practice was proven false (Elliot, 2000). Hanney (2013) used the production of the documentary

video as an example to support that practitioners should have "knowledge of aesthetics,

production of meaning" and "a deep consideration of ethics and the nature of representation" (p.

45). He continues, "these capacities only overtly emerge through 'practice' and can properly be

seen as the fruit of this synthesis between the practical and the theoretical in action" (Hanney,

2013, p.45). Both Elliot and Dickson assert that media educators may propose an integrated

curriculum that combines theory and practice, and that this is the future of media education

(Elliot, 2000; Dickson, 2000).

Hanney (2013) analyzes the necessity of "project-led problem-solving" learning in media

education, which defines the media practice in curriculum. It is also a pedagogy that focuses on

flexible application of theory and practice. When it comes to theory, the Oregon Report provides

eight concepts ("Planning for curriculum change", 1987) for media education, which include "(a)

Mass communication and society; (b) The history of mass communication; (c) The economics of

mass communication; (d) The philosophy and ethics of mass communication; (e) The legal and

regulatory aspects of mass communication; (f) The technology of mass communication; (g)

Communication theory; and (h) International communication system" (p.51-52). Combining

these eight media concepts with practices in media education, "a broad-based, integrated, cross-media approach is the best" (Christ, 1997, p.13; Blanchard & Christ, 1997) for curriculum design. In the field of digital media education, Kang and Kang (2010) suggested that "Liberal-professional" (p.6) curricula would benefit the study of media technology, which integrates theory and skills. More precisely, liberal curriculum emphasizes the learning of theory, history and ethics within the scope of media phenomena, while practical curricula emphasizes primarily broadcast production skills learning. Liberal-professional learning is a combination of both theory and practice. Furthermore, the "New Professionalism" (Blanchard & Christ, 1997, p.46) indicates that media education should include: "the conceptual core, a conceptual enrichments component, and an experiential learning capstone or media workshop emphasizing familiarity and understanding with, rather than technical proficiency in, media technology" (Blanchard & Christ, p.46).

2.4.2 Questions for theory-practice curriculum

There are two questions that media educators should take into consideration when they design theory-practice media curriculum:

Firstly, are media professional training and vocational training equal in anyway? Many educators would say "not really". Media professional practice refers to an "extended training, a high standard of ethics, specialized knowledge and expertise" (Hanney, 2013, p.45) while vocational training "provides trade skills for workers to earn a living" (Lee, 2008, p.59). A survey has shown that media practitioners pay more attention to individual moral character rather than specific media-related technical competencies (Dickson, 2000 p.169). Although both professional practice and vocational training improve the necessary skills, the former is the sole

preparation that benefits the building of the individual's character. Professional practice is more complicated, involving the development of critical and creative thinking. An excellent professional practitioner not only needs to "craft skills", that is, "the ability to manipulate technology, tools and equipment in synthesis with the application of theoretical knowledge" (Hanney, 2013, p.46), but also have "a high level of specialist theoretical knowledge across a broad range of subjects" (Hanney, p.46).

Secondly, is there a gap between media education and real work? Tian, Liang and Zhao (2015) mentioned that, in this digital age, current media-related practices in school lags behind the real work practices. According to Melkote (2008), academic media and the media industry are disconnected from each other. Different learning "spaces and times" shows the differences between the workplace and the university courses (Elliot, 2000). Furthermore, it implies the differences of learning focuses: academia certainly pays more attention to theory; and real media work concentrates more on practice. According to much related research on media education, the theory-practice combination curriculum has decreased the classification of education and work (Elliot).

In order to bridge the gap, some universities have tried to construct a real-work environment in the classroom (Hanney, 2013; Elliot, 2000). Could university students learn in simulacra of media professional practices? "Work situations are constructed and role-played with the hope that the experiences will transfer to real practice at a larger stage. These kinds of learning are useful, but lack the dynamic context of real-work practice" (Hanney, 2013, p.47). Elliot claims "it is impossible exactly to replicate work conditions in university when the process involves such a different space and time" (p.21).

Meanwhile, many universities have provided internships for students to be able to bridge academia and the media industry, in the hope of connecting together the skills and knowledge with real work practice (Blanchard & Christ, 1993; Hanney, 2013). As Blanchard and Christ (1993) explained, "by providing students with work in media outlets along with the self-reflective, questioning aspects of an academic context, students are able to get first-hand knowledge for evaluating their own interest and passions" (p.118). This furthers that internship in higher education media education could be advocated.

However, media internship in China still has some problems. It is hard for students to get opportunities to practice and to receive effective guidance. Many internships arrange for students merely to do chores and run errands. It has been found that students have not been able to be involved in the core aspects of the media operations and editorial activities during their internships (Chen, 2013); therefore, students were apparently not able to take advantage of the benefits of their internships.

Besides internship, there are other outcome assessments that examine whether the graduating student is ready to work. Turk (1997) designed a survey used in the College of Journalism and Mass Communications at the University of South Carolina, to explore the university's outcomes assessment system. Among their outcome assessment methods, the "exit Interview" (p.85) (a sit-down interview with department educators to assess students' work in school and identify strengths and weaknesses before starting work) is a method that strives to bridge the gap between learning in school and real work.

Exit interview is employed to assess learning as students leave a journalist and mass communication program to enter a professional career or practice…The interview

typically focuses on academic performance - acquisition of cognitive, behavioural, and

affective skills and knowledge - and how this performance related to expected career

requirement. (Turk, 1997, p. 85)

Besides the "Exit Interview" (p.85), Turk also examined four other assessment

techniques: (1) "Internship" (p.83): evaluation of students performance in the work place; (2)

"Capstone course" (p.84): evaluating the demonstration of their learning in coursework; (3)

"Portfolios" (p.86): evaluation of students' professional skills development, including samples of

class assignments, instructors' comments and samples of work produced and awards received;

(4) "Comprehensive examinations" (p.86): comprehensive evaluation of the graduates.

All media-related studies provide a theoretical platform for research design. Because of

the evolution of the media industry, media educators are faced with an increasing number of

challenges in both curriculum and pedagogy (Dickson, 2000). Based upon the information

gained from the learning, I seek to explore the balancing of theory and practice in Chinese

universities' media education. The theories help me develop thoughtful views towards the current

situation.

3   Research Methodology

In the miner metaphor, knowledge is understood as buried metal and the interviewer is a

miner who unearths the valuable metal … knowledge is waiting in the subjects' interior

to be uncovered uncontaminated by the miner. The interviewer digs nuggets of data or

meaning out of a subject's pure experiences, unpolluted by any leading questions. (Kvale,

1996, p.3)

3.1   Method: Semi-structured interviews

Individual, face-to-face, semi-structured interviews were conducted in this research. The

individual semi-structured interview, as one of the in-depth individual types of interviews, allows

"the interviewer to delve deeply into social and personal matters" (DiCicco, Bloom & Crabtree,

2006, p. 315). Qu and Dumay (2011) concluded that the semi-structured interview is "flexible,

accessible and intelligible and, more importantly, capable of disclosing important and often

hidden facets of human and organizational behavior" (p. 246).

There are two goals in this research: (a) to develop a holistic view of current university

level media education curriculum in China, especially the values and beliefs of theory and

practice that media educators and professionals hold to support their work at present; and (b)

exploring what values and beliefs of theory and practice that might underpin the development of

media education curriculum in the future. In order to achieve these goals, I acquired basic

information about the existing current media education curriculum in Chinese universities in

Beijing. The semi-structured interview is a popular qualitative research method that keeps the

interview focused on the main research topic, while also exploring deeper into the issues. It gave

me, as the interviewer, as well as the participants, more space to find perspectives or issues that

may have been hidden or ignored.

Well-organized interview questions are the key to mastering semi-structured interviews. Questions in the interview should be worded in such a way as to "create openings for a narrative to unfold, while also including questions informed by theory" (Galletta, 2013, p.2). Also, the questions in the semi-structured interview should "leave a space through which you might explore with participants the contextual influences evident in the narratives but not always narrated as such" (Galletta, 2013, p.2). In this research, the main questions were open-end. And sub-questions, such as, "why" or "how" were always followed by Yes/No questions. In addition, in this work, there were no questions that might guide or bias the interviewees' thinking (Adams, 2010; Galletta, 2013).

Incorporating new questions is an obvious feature of the semi-structured interview (DiCicco, Bloom & Crabtree, 2006; Qu & Dumay, 2011; Adams, 2010; Galletta, 2013). In the process of the interview, field notes were taken to record and explore what participants said during the interview. An electronic voice recorder was utilized to record each interview.

As a whole, the semi-structured method allows the interviewer to pay much attention to the deeper opinions of the interviewees, and demands "a great deal of care and planning" (Qu & Dumay, 2011, p.247). Adams (2010) provided some suggestions for interviewers to be aware of. In my study, the interview was organized under his guidance: "Box 1. Conducting a semi-structured interview" (p. 19). (See Figure 1)

Figure 1: Adams's guidance of *Conducting a semi-structured interview*

3.2 Participants and recruitment

3.2.1 Recruitment method: Snowballing

Beijing, the capital of China, is a hub that connects national politics, economy and culture. Among the 100 key universities in China, there are 26 in Beijing. Also, a great number of commercial media organizations that include many popular social media platforms have their main offices in China. Almost all of the national, non-commercial media organizations are established in Beijing. The decision to carry out the research in Beijing was an obvious one because of this milieu. All the participants in this study were selected from Beijing universities and organizations.

The participants were volunteers who came from either their university's School of Media or from media organizations in Beijing. The snowballing selection method was utilized in this research to collect participants. The selection steps were as follows: at the beginning, invitation letters were sent out to some professors at universities and professionals that I knew from the media industry. Sometime those I contacted would recommend another individual, who

I would then try to contact. After receiving my invitation letter, people had two weeks to consider whether or not they wanted to take part in the research. Ultimately, there were two groups of participants chosen; each group was comprised of either professors or professionals. The professors came from top universities in Beijing; the professionals came from major media organizations in Beijing.

Some challenges were faced while recruiting participants. As an example, when I first designed this research, I anticipated that there would be ten participants - five professors from higher education media education and five personnel from media organizations. Ultimately, there were four professional participants who were able to take part. As for the professors, although I initially interviewed five, one of them dropped out during the process, preventing her interview from being completed - this professor, during the course of the process, finally told me she did not really want to be interviewed, that the reason why she initially accepted was because a friend asked her to do it and she did not want to disappoint that friend. As a result of her dropping out, only four of the professors' interviews were valid.

3.2.2 Participants' demographics

The four professors that fully participated in this research went under the self-chosen pseudonyms of Hill, Hongmeng, KK and Qian from three different top model universities in Beijing. Each professor provided their own academic philosophy to support their views of media education system in China. In addition, as professors are regarded as a bridge that help connect students with knowledge, as well as help to connect school and society (Zhang, 2011), their opinions should be noted as important and influential. The participating professors came from the key universities that are part of China's "Project 211." All of the professors work in the

School of Journalism and Communication at their particular universities; and they all have more than ten years working experience teaching in the field of media and communication.

There were four professionals from four different major media organizations in the media industry who participated in this research, under the self-chosen pseudonyms of Easy, Dada, Duoji and Yi. The participating professionals seemed to be proficient in applying what theory and practice are needed in the workplace, as well as what values and beliefs support their work. They were asked to review their own media education, as well as their work, and then compare what they learned in university with what they really used on the job. They were also asked to make an assessment of the internship program operative in their media organizations. The participants of this group came from both commercial and non-commercial media organizations. The types of media that were examined included radio, television and Internet (mobile phone, internet platform, and internet video platform). All professionals that were interviewed had at least five years' work experience in addition to their media education background. All of their jobs were either in journalism or editing.

3.3 Data analysis

> The precious facts and meanings are purified by transcribing them from the oral to the written mode. The knowledge nuggets remain constant through the transformation of appearances on the conveyor belt from the oral stage of written storage. By analysis, the objective facts and the essential meanings are drawn out by various techniques and molded into their definitive form. (Kvale, 1996, p.3)

Semi-structured interviews were the sole data source for this research project. The hour-long, face-to-face, semi-structured interviews with each participant were conducted in Mandarin.

After compiling the interviews, I made the transcriptions. I transcribed the oral interviews into written form for further textual analysis. The transcriptions were presented in Simplified Chinese and some parts were translated into English.

In this research, data analysis included two parts: "within the single interview" and "single interview as it relates to other interviews" (Galletta, 2013, p. 126). In the first step of analysis, I interpreted participants' meaning, and I distinguished their perspectives. I then compared the individual statements and their meanings within each group. Common views and unique views within each of the two groups began to appear. The next step was to compare the opinions between the two groups to draw a complete picture that presented all opinions. I grouped the similar views; meanwhile, keeping the unique perspectives distinct in the process of comparison. The hope is that the results of this research may contribute toward helping educators review current media education curriculum in higher education and to be able to construct a projected framework of what media education can eventually look like in China.

As well as going on after the interviews, the data analysis process is concurrent to the data collection. "In qualitative research, data analysis occurs alongside data collection" (Galletta, 2013, p. 119). As Galletta suggests, "it is best to keep the data analysis fairly loose in its construction early on, entertaining many analytic possibilities" (p.120). As the configuration of semi-structured interviews leaves room for questions to be created on the spot, the process of data analysis was ongoing during the interviews, as well as after them. Thus, the notes taken during the interviews were very important for with the analysis of the data.

3.4 Ethics

Ethical responsibility is a concern for each qualitatively researching interviewer (Kvale,

S, 1996; DiCicco−Bloom & Crabtree, 2006; Qu & Dumay, 2011; Adams, 2010; Galletta, 2013).

My respect for each participant was reflected in the process of the interview and my care continuously dedicated throughout, so that no harm would be imposed upon the participants' psyche health, reputation, religion, background, beliefs or values. Pseudonyms were used to protect private information. My opinions were restrained and were not expressed, to assure there was no external influence upon the participants' perspective. "The interviewer's task is to obtain information while listening and encouraging another person to speak" (DiCicco−Bloom & Crabtree, 2006, p.319). Also, the interviews were conducted in places chosen by the participants (such as a coffee shop, participant's home, or office) where they felt safe and comfortable. An audio recording was made of each interview after agreement was made with each participant.

A skillful interviewer can "modify the style, pace and ordering of questions to evoke the fullest responses from the interviewee" (Qu & Dumay, 2011, p.246). Based on my understanding of research methods, theories and analysis of the ethical considerations, I cultivated my perspective on how to collect and analyze the data for my research. Ultimately, in the interviewing process, I needed to develop "a respect for and curiosity about what people say, and a systematic effort to really hear and understand what people tell you" (Rubin & Rubin, 1995, p. 17).

3.5 Limitation

There were three limitations in this study:

Firstly, this qualitative research may not be representative of the whole media education in Chinese higher education today. When put in the light of China's huge population, eight participants' perspectives seems hardly able to reflect the entirety of media education in China.

With this concern, I tried to select participants who could represent the mainstream ideology in Chinese media education. Beijing, because of its milieu, was selected as the place to conduct this research conducted. All of the participants in this study were selected from universities and media organizations in Beijing. More precisely, four of the professors were selected from three top model universities; and four of the professional are selected form four major media across different platforms.

Secondly, the various schools of media in China do not have standardized ways of doing things. As mentioned in the first chapter, in China, types of media-related majors are diverse. Although there are many similar professional curriculums, different universities or schools of media have their own specific goals, methodology and pedagogy, which may vary from institution to institution.

Thirdly, as far as people working in the field, although all the professionals came from media education backgrounds; they all had graduated at least 4 years prior to the interview. Therefore, their reflections of media education were based on their somewhat dated educational experiences. The media industry, as well as media education, is certainly rapidly evolving. As for the academic participants' recollections, they may have, indeed, not totally reflected the current state of media education.

4 Findings

In this chapter, I presented my findings that were collected from the interviews. The goal of this research was to address the main research question by answering the sub-questions that I put forth. The main question being: "What are the values and beliefs underpinning higher education media education curriculum in Beijing, China?" and the three sub-questions: (a) what are the values and beliefs of theory underpinning media education curriculum in Beijing, China; (b) what are the values and beliefs of practice underpinning media education curriculum in Beijing, China; (c) What might the underpinning values and beliefs be in Chinese media education in the future?

The interview transcript analyses of each sub-question were separated into two groups: the interviews done with the professors and those done with the professionals. Four professors took part in the interviews; they came from three universities located in Beijing. They chose the pseudonyms Hill, Hongmeng, KK and Qian. These three universities are among the key universities chosen in the government sponsored "Project 211". All of the professors teach in the School of Journalism and Communication at their universities; and each has over ten years of work experience teaching in the field of media and communication. The professionals who participated in the interviews numbered four as well. Their self-chosen pseudonyms were: Easy, Dada, Duoji and Yi. They come from four different media organizations. These four organizations include a TV station, a radio station, a website and a mobile phone media platform. All professionals had five years' work experience at the time of their interviews and an academic background in media education. They all work in either journalism or editing.

At the outset, I transcribed the oral interviews into written form for further textual analysis. The transcripts are in Chinese. Firstly, I analyzed each interview transcript, and distinguished the perspectives of the participants. Secondly, I compared the individual statements and their meanings within each group. In these semi-structured interviews, I also interpreted what the interviewees said during the process. Thus, the notes taken during the interviews helped with the analysis of the data.

4.1 "Sub-question 1: What are the values and beliefs of theory underpinning media education curriculum in Beijing, China?"

4.1.1 Professors' opinions

In this section, I presented the findings of the professors' views on the first sub research question. There was a tendency among the professors to separate the two different kinds of theories existing in media curriculum: one being the professional theory found in Journalism and Communications; and the other one being theory in the Liberal Arts curriculum. The professors indicated that both types of theories are equally important in media curriculum. They mentioned the importance of students building their own individual knowledge base that would help them acquire an open perspective with which to view the diverse issues in society. Based upon their statements, it seems that a strong theoretical base seems to be the foundation upon which students may improve this ability. I synthesized their responses into four categories: Theory in Breadth course, Theory in Chinese traditional culture, Theory learning and moral education, and The relationship between theory and practice.

Theory in Breadth course

The professors in this research stated that they support the idea of cross-disciplinary learning, in such disciplines as History, Economics, Law and English, depending on what the student has a propensity towards and what kind of job he or she wants to do in the future. For example, if student desires to be a journalist with a specialization in economics, that student may want to have a good grounding in the relative rules of policy, stocks, social development trends, etc.

The professors also referred to this kind of learning as breadth courses. Hongmeng explained that breadth courses in higher education

> "transcend beyond the major and support students to investigate other courses." (see Appendix B-1 for original interview transcription)

In Hongmeng's department, breadth courses comprise 50% of the curriculum; professional theory curriculum makes up 20% and the other 30% consist of practical courses. Also, all of the professors found that a growing number of both commercial and non-commercial media organizations prefer to recruit some liberal arts graduates. All professors said that merely learning the professional knowledge found in the journalism and communications courses would not fully equip the students once they were out in the world. They said students needed to have a good base in liberal arts knowledge before working.

The interdisciplinary method seems to be a very good way for students to learn more liberal arts knowledge. There are some problems in the process of implementation, however. One challenge is: "does the university have the ability to arrange more liberal arts courses for their students?" In Hongmeng's university, rich resources are available, but in Qian's university, the

scarcity of teachers is a big problem for them to be able to provide sufficient liberal arts curricula for the media and communication students. In Hill's university, they do have some interdisciplinary learning across certain fields. For example, some students in Digital Media are able to select courses in Journalism in the field of Media and Communication.

Another concern is: "what hat courses should students take?" The interdisciplinary courses differ from the compulsory courses in the university in that they are mainly public elective courses. In these areas, students have the right to select the courses that they want to take. However, Qian pointed out the phenomenon that some students might choose those courses that are easy, to get credits. She worried that some media students might not realize the importance of the broadening they would receive by taking liberal art courses.

Theory in Chinese traditional culture

All of the professors said most of the professional theories that students are learning come from western countries. Hongmeng said that the Chinese media industry appeared after the 80's; making it a fairly new field in China, making media-related curriculum and pedagogy equally as young. During our interviews, the professors did not express whether or not they felt that mainly learning western media professional theories is good or not. Qian, mentioned that Chinese traditional culture, as another kind of theory, should also be added into the media and communications learning. Qian said

> "Media is something that communicates with people, because you deliver people's issues, needs and hopes through media platforms. You should know the philosophical principles that guide human beings. In this connection, Chinese traditional culture, which is called Wulun (the five relationships among persons, comprising the primary the principles of Confucianism) can be seen as very important. Principally, if you understand the rules, in other words, have common sense, this will guide you to be able to judge and find the nature of things." (see Appendix B-2 for original interview transcription)

Qian indicated that although this kind of course could help students understand traditional knowledge, it does not presently exist in media curriculum. "We ignore moral education," Qian said. Qian said she tries to inject this kind of knowledge into her courses. For example, in her News Writing class, she always adds some traditional Chinese beliefs, into the curriculum, which, she feels, will help students gain knowledge about some Confucian values and improve their judgment.

Theory learning and moral education

Some professors mentioned that there is a proper attitude and demeanor that students in the media fields should develop for their future work. KK pointed out,

> "Students should have the ability to manage their emotions. When they face difficulties, they should be able to control their mood, keep calm and carry on. Now people always have much pressure in life. There are some conflicts and choices on the job. So we should manage emotion well. When we face those pressures, we should be able to deal with them." (see Appendix B-3 for original interview transcription)

Hongmeng and Hill also discussed the point that the individual should develop a high moral standard. In Qian's opinion, Chinese traditional culture would provide a crucial foundation for media curriculum. Qian said learning traditional culture is the way to attach importance to students' moral education. She stated,

> "Students always write something they consider funny or stimulating, or that cater to others' view. Our purpose of education is not to just to cater to the students, but to guide them with right concepts." (see Appendix B-4 for original interview transcription)

The relationship between theory and practice

All of the professors indicated that theory and practice each have different functions in media education. They found it difficult to say which one is more important and that they work

in conjunction. Some of the professors' comments on this subject were as follows:

> "The main purpose of learning theory is to guide practice."
> Theory is used to solve the practical issues."
> The outcome of theory learning is evaluated in the process of doing practical work."
> Theory helps people stand on the shoulders of those who came before and take a step further."
> Theory guides students to better understand their work in the future." (see Appendix B-5 for original interview transcription)

All of them mentioned that theory and practice could not be separated.

Among the professors it was stated each period of study has a different focus in theory and practice. They said that, in China, theory learning is mainly studied during the graduate period, while the undergraduate study may be organized to have more practice opportunities. Universities have different educational criteria for each different learning period. KK said

> "Undergraduate education is to cultivate application-type personnel, while graduates need more research ability. For the undergrads, if they do not have enough practical skills, it is hard for them to improve in theories." (see Appendix B-6 for original interview transcription)

In Hongmeng's department, students have more media-related subject choices during the graduate period. In their graduate period they have gained insight into their career plans. In short, the professors felt that the learning of basic theory is needed for every student.

> Hongmeng asserted

> "Professional media learning may be circumscribed, but theory learning is borderless".
> (see Appendix B-7 for original interview transcription)

He pointed out that students must be strongly self-directed, in order to not get lost amid all the diverse information coming their way. He also said

> "Knowledge's framework should be constructed within practice." (see Appendix B-8 for original interview transcription)

KK considered theory as system of concepts.

Hill stated

> "When we use theory in practice, we may create a new understanding". (see Appendix B-9 for original interview transcription)

4.1.2 Professionals' opinions

In this section, I present the findings of the professionals' views towards the first sub research question. All of the participating professionals concurred that theory learning is an important foundation for the workplace. The kind of theory that the professional participants discussed was professional theory. Although they could not recite an entire original theoretical sentence they were able to explain the meaning, (and their understanding of the meanings) of these theories and how these theories influenced the way they think and work. Dada mentioned,

> "The reason why theory is important is because theories help us to look at a field logically and systematically." (see Appendix B-10 for original interview transcription)

Meanwhile, each of the participants had some negative views about theory learning, which gave an indication of how they generally view theory in media education. I synthesized the professionals' responses into two categories: Gap between schooling and "real work" and Continual learning in theory.

Gap between schooling and "real work"

There is a big gap between higher education media education and the real-world work to come. The experience of three of the professional participants reflected that theories they learned in university were presented in too brief a manner to give them a thorough enough understanding of the whole of media. Dada said she thought the depth of theory learning offered in university

was not enough and she was left feeling that what she learned was useless. Doji expressed,

> "At the beginning of work, theory that students learn in university cannot guide practice, at least for me." (see Appendix B-11 for original interview transcription)

Dada and Easy found many things in their workplace are differed from what they learned in school. Easy mentioned that the media industry has developed so fast that some of the new concepts cannot be learned before starting work. For example, when Easy graduated, digital media had become popular and had a rapid development pace. He had not learnt too many things about it before starting to work. He said that what he learned in university might account for only 30% of his future development. Doji thought:

> "Theory helps students to know and judge the issues and society… Anyone can decide what they think is good. One of the differences is that media professionals learn professional vocabulary. Although the public does not use professional vocabulary, they are still able to evaluate for themselves if the media product is good or not. Along these same lines, a student can learn all the theory in the world but not be able to create great media product". (see Appendix B-12 for original interview transcription)

Continual learning in theory

Our participants said they did not learn professional media theory on their own initiative during working hours, except for taking some exams at work. They rather preferred to learn some theory from other fields. For example, Doji was taking some courses in a business administration program. Dada and Easy read some books about economics, politics, art, etc., which helped them discern more about society. Yi who is an editor, prefers to improve her writing skills through reading both books and the news written by practiced editors. The things each of them wants to learn depend on their interests and job requirements.

There are some special requirements for people in special media organizations. Our participants in the professional group come from four different media organizations. Different

work experience has fostered different mindsets among them about Chinese media education.

China has a unique media environment. The central government directly controls the media

organizations, including the national media organizations, such as China Central Television

(CCTV), China Radio International (CRI) and all of the local TV stations, and indirectly, such

organizations as Youko.com Inc. In the media field in China, we always delineate the formerly

mentioned as "non-commercial media organizations", and the latter as "commercial media

organizations". Among the participants in this research, two are working in non-commercial

media organizations. They mentioned that employees working there should have a strong

political consciousness. Yi said professionals should have right values, and their attitudes should

be optimistic. Easy stated,

> "Our media organization represents the nation's attitude, and we cannot make any
> mistakes in politics." (see Appendix B-13 for original interview transcription)

Therefore, Yi and Easy said they should learn political theories during their media education.

Doji previously worked in a commercial media company, and is presently working in a non-

commercial media organization. He expressed the same concerns. Dada, who is working in a

commercial company, did not mention politics as a special point. She said that media is a thing

that touches various aspects of society, and requires a wide range of working knowledge.

4.1.3 Sub-question 1 conclusion

Theory learning in current media curriculum should be enhanced. Theories that the

participants discussed should be divided into two categories: professional media theory and non-

professional media theory. (1) Media-professional theory learning: the professional participants

suggested that the media teacher should help strengthen the connection between theories and real

working practice; and media educators should accelerate students' acquisition of the current concepts and continually update the curriculum. The professors were the ones who introduced the current situation of professional theory learning. (2) Non-media-professional theory learning: both the professors and the professionals suggested adding more breadth courses to higher education media education curriculum. The professionals provided many examples to underscore the importance of non-professional theory learning, such as, learning political and economic theory while on the job. In addition, they indicated the importance of continuing theory learning. Each of them confirmed the importance of theory, although they added that its place in curriculum design still needs more improvement.

4.2 "Sub-question 2: What are the values and beliefs of practice underpinning media education curriculum in Beijing, China?"

4.2.1 Professors' opinions

In this section, I present the findings of the professors' views towards the second sub research question. About this question, all of professors taking part in this research had similar opinions. I synthesized their responses into four categories: Significance of Practice, Challenges in Practice, Technique in field of media: Low-threshold, and Vocationally-oriented training in media education.

Significance of practice

China's Ministry of Education has set up some unified curricula that all students in Chinese universities need to register for, such as courses in politics, foreign languages and physical education. The professors said that in each university, the department heads are the ones

that set up curricula. The directors of each School of Media in the different universities determine the plans and goals for their department's curriculum. Although each university designs its own curricula independently, it was found that all the universities that were indirectly involved in this research (through the involvement of the professors who took part) attach importance to practice courses.

All of the professors mentioned that professional practical skills comprised the foundation upon which students could build their professionalism. Hongmeng said that at his university 50% of the curricula contained breadth courses, 20% was made up of professional theory courses, and 30% was professional practices courses. In Qian's department, they provide internships for students in social media organizations. She said that students at each college level in her university are allowed to intern during their four university years. In Hongmeng's department, students can graduate without writing a thesis. In its place, proof of practical work must be provided.

Other than the practical experience that is offered within the curricula, the professors acknowledged that there were many other practical training opportunities outside of the curriculum. For example, all of the professors said that each university has their own media platform, such as radio station, websites, magazines and TV station, as well as campus media organizations run by students and teachers. Students may also set up students' clubs and associations concerned with various topics that are open to all students. The professors involved in this research said their way was not to force students to do practical work, but rather provide ample opportunity and encourage them to take part. In addition, the professors said that there are practice opportunities that take place outside of school. For example, teachers encourage students

to take on internships to gather real working experience and enable them to more critically

examine what and how they learn in the class.

Challenges in practice

Although there are various kinds of practice in media education, professors discussed that

the current practices that exist for students are still not enough. The professors then analyzed the

problems and provided some suggestions. Firstly, they said, many students' attitude towards

practice needs to improve. KK provided two possibilities for this attitude problem: (a) although,

in KK's opinion, scores in and of themselves are not important, he feels that students might pay

more attention to getting more credits than to the substance of the work, (b) students tend to

focus on finding employment in the last year of media education, which results in their being

distracted from learning. He also pointed out

> "My students do not have any problem learning; the problem is with acquiring skills.
> They need have a more diligent working spirit and a more proactive attitude. Some of
> them lack of initiative". (see Appendix B-14 for original interview transcription)

Secondly, all of the professors in this research mentioned that many media instructors,

themselves, lack practical media working experience. For example, they indicated that some

media instructors graduated from schools other than a school of media, and some media

instructors started working as soon as they graduated without having had practical experience. In

Hill's university, there is a requirement that instructors older than 35 should have more than one

year of work experience before teaching. Thirdly, Hongmeng said that there is not a strong

enough similarity between the curriculum practice and the practice in the media industry,

creating in both the teachers and students a lack of understanding of what media is. Hongmeng

added that enhancing the connections between the media courses and the real media industry

could set the groundwork for better future media education development.

Technique in the field of media: Low-threshold

Hongmeng used the term "low-threshold" to describe the special entrance situation that exists in media. Some of the other professors also used the term to explain that professional media skills are easy to learn. In other words, the threshold for entrance into the media industry is low. Hongmeng pointed out that,

> "[Fostering] the talents needed in journalism and communication can be accomplished by training the students' practical abilities". (see Appendix B-15 for original interview transcription)

In other words, learning the knowledge that one needs to work in journalism and communication is done primarily by practical training. Hongmeng prefers to encourage students to have interdisciplinary learning, provide more practical opportunities for them, inspire them to learn actively, and help them to awaken their own individual potential.

Hill also mentioned an interesting point, namely, "the free learning of journalism". He provided an example to make it clear: if you graduated from the Department of Law, you could then plan to work as a journalist who focuses on reporting news about law. Compared to graduating from the Department of Journalism, learning how to write news is easier than learning and applying in the field, the related knowledge about Law. The employer might prefer to ask the law students to do the report. Hill worried about this phenomenon and that it might be a big challenge for students graduating from the media-related departments.

Vocationally-oriented training in media education

All of the professors who took part in this research thought that higher education media

education in China is vocationally oriented. This denotes that the final goal of media education is employment. Hongmeng thought media education is an applied subject. This subject has a clear and specific corresponding vocational target area, as does, let's say, education towards becoming a doctor. KK and Qian also thought undergraduate students are cultivated to be applied personnel, while graduate students focus more on the theory learning and research. KK thought that in the field, more undergraduate students are needed. He stated

> "More people are needed to do the practical activities and deal with the actual issues. Those people do not have to receive graduate education." (see Appendix B-16 for original interview transcription)

Qian did not assess which one is more important. However, she worried that, although this trend may meet the needs of the media market, it might lead students to become mere workers without profound thinking and holistic views.

Hill analyzed this trend by categorizing the different levels of universities. He agreed that employment was important; but he queried

> "The top universities enroll excellent students; do they just direct their help to find those good students jobs?" (see Appendix B-17 for original interview transcription)

He felt that this is not just. Based on his experience, he found that the best students had been enrolled in such subjects as Literature, the Humanities, Philosophy or Sociology, subjects that had nothing to do with their employment. Hill's university, which is a media school, does not have some subjects such as philosophy. Most students who study at this university, according to Hill, went there to find jobs in the media industry. In consideration of the specialty focus and ranking of his university, it seems proper that media education's direction be vocationally oriented.

4.2.2 Professionals' opinions

In this section, I present the findings of professionals' views towards the second sub research question. Those four participants reviewed the practices in school and at work. I synthesized their responses into three categories: Changes of perspectives towards Practice, Practice in school and at work, Internship, and Technique in the field of media: Low-threshold.

Changes of perspectives towards practice

Three professionals taking part in this research described a particular process that takes place from graduation to working. What the students learn in the beginning of their school career will play a major role in their future work life. However, early on they find that there are gaps between their schooling and the real work. During the first 3 to 4 years at work, they mainly do practical things, applying little theory learning. During this period, the professionals always find that they have already learned the skills in their field that will allow them to independently make media products. After 5 or 6 years of practical experience accumulation, these same professionals find the knowledge they possess is not enough; and to augment their repertoire, they may gradually turn their interests to the arts, international relations, economics, etc. Most professionals will utilize further study to supplement their knowledge for their careers, which could be classified as continuing education. All of the professional participants who took part in this research are in the transition phase between the second period and the third period. The ability to do practical work is obviously the most important thing in the real world.

Practice in school and at work

As the four professionals reviewed their own histories in their university media

education, they said they had experienced many practical opportunities, not only in class but also in the broader school environment. They took part in student organizations and clubs, such as, the university TV stations and the Journalists Club, which helped them to improve such abilities as networking, teamwork and hands-on skills. They said that the practical skills they learned while at university were important to them and helped equip them for entering the workplace. Easy said, media has developed so swiftly that those new on the job do not have much time to adjust to their new environment. He said, media education in university is the foundation for future continued learning. All of the professionals in this research suggested that if students want to advance greatly in their media education, they need to work in real media organizations. Yi clarified

> "Actually, the skills that we learned in school are comprehensive, such as how to write news, what we should notice in news writing, what the process of data collection is and how to report catastrophic news. But you do not have enough mastery to apply these skills on the job." (see Appendix B-18 for original interview transcription)

In addition, the professionals taking part in this research articulated that the on-the-job social environment is totally different from the school environment. There are a myriad of concerns at work, including peer competition, networking, financial pressure, which are not on students' minds when they are in school. Easy said there is no room for mistakes. The school life, on the other hand, is totally different. Teachers always say that they encourage students to make mistakes, in order to learn and improve. Dada cherished the memory of having practiced work with classmates that was full of imagination, creation and fun discussion. She also made many good friends at that time. However, for a successful future work life, all this is far from enough.

Internship

Based on interviewing the professional participants, I made a table (Table 1) that briefly summarizes interns' work in Chinese media organizations. It shows the departmental requirements of students and students' own requirements that four professionals mentioned from both the non-commercial media organizations and the commercial media organizations. We can see that it is mostly sophomore and junior students who take the initiative for internship, striving to help their future employment. Meanwhile, different kinds of media organizations have different rules and regulations. In non-commercial media organizations, there is a complicated and strict examination and approval system from small department to upper administration where only the director can determine which interns will be recruited into commercial media organizations. There is never any payment for interns, no matter how long they work in a non-commercial media organization.

Table 1: A brief summary of internship in Chinese media organizations

		Non-commercial Media	Commercial Media
Individual	Purpose	Future employment	Future employment; for fun
	Application	Most are individual request.	Most are individual request.
	Grade	Most are sophomore and junior	Most are sophomore and junior
Media departments	Number	Average 3 interns per department	Average 3 interns per department
	Working Time	Some no more than 3 months; some more than 6 months	More than 3 months
	Recruit	Complicated examine	Simple approval by director
	Payment	No	Yes

When it comes to the assessment of the interns' work, our participants have different views. Three of the professionals in this research were satisfied with the interns' work. They found them hardworking and possessing great creativity, with high motivation to learn from others in the workplace. Dada claimed

> "If we encourage these youngsters in the proper way, they could do better." (see Appendix B-19 for original interview transcription)

Still, among some other participants, however, there seemed to be expectations that the interns did not meet: 1) their professional proficiency needed more improvement. Easy said that some of them were not adept at using some of the media equipment well. 2) Some interns seem to be emotionally fragile and a little bit selfish. (3) Yi stated that their ideological knowledge needs improvement.

Among the four professionals involved in this research, one of them, Duoji, was not satisfied with his interns' work. He felt that his interns did not have enough self-control. Some interns did not follow the work schedule of their department. Sometimes, they asked for leave without considering the whole working plan. All of this reflects a lack of a developed sense of responsibility. The interns did not receive any reprimand if they made mistakes. There were also sometimes problems, Duoji said, where they did not admit their mistakes and they did not let anyone else know if they made a mistake, which often made things worse for the organization when others finally found out.

Technique in the filed of media: Low-threshold

Dada and Doji mentioned that there is a low skills threshold for entry into the media industry. In the previous media organization that Dada worked in, there were many people who,

when they started at entry level, knew nothing about the media. Nevertheless, having had an

interest in the media industry, they wanted to try working there. She said, it takes no more than

three months for a person to acquire all the skills that they would need to work. Furthermore,

Doji stated

> "The threshold is not high for the requirement of skills; but one should learn the field and gain deeper capacity, if he/she wants to have good media products, like documentary or programs." (see Appendix B-20 for original interview transcription)

Some prefer pursuing a higher degree. However, as previously mentioned, there is the

phenomenon that students always prefer their further study to be in fields other than media. Doji

continued,

> "Media professionals are the people who are in the avant-garde of the age. They should be continually learning, continually open to new things, and continually improving their insight." (see Appendix B-21 for original interview transcription)

> The low threshold phenomenon is a factor in the new graduate finding employment.

Professionalism is not the crucial employment assessment criteria. Doji has had the experience of

being an examiner in employment interviews. He presented that, in the first part, examiners

would mainly ask what issues candidates were interested in or currently focused on. In the

second part, examiners checked the candidates' professional skills. Actually, examiners knew

what the applicants learned in school, but the purpose of this part of the exam was to check what

knowledge they still retained. The third part of the interview was most important. The

candidates' abilities, such as logic, creativity or personal perspective were evaluated. For

example, a topic was given and the candidates were asked to design a program. Doji gave this

example of what the examiner would say

> "It is crucial to see candidate's potentials, including the manner of thinking and

observation, when we decided whether he/she could enter the next round of interviews. We understand that you do not have very much experience, but we just want to see if you have some new ideas or whether your logic of designing is clear. If you are perfect in the first two parts but bad in third one, you will not go on to the next recruiting round." (see Appendix B-22 for original interview transcription)

In addition, Doji stated that some commercial media organizations prefer to recruit undergraduate students, rather than graduate students. He thought some graduate students were too academic, and therefore, could not implement well in practice. Most of the tasks, he said, do not need the academic background to be accomplished. Doji pointed out

"One may feel that it is easier for a department to cultivate undergrads. And undergrads are quicker to get into the work than higher degreed students." (see Appendix B-23 for original interview transcription)

On the contrary, Yi, who worked in a non-commercial media organization, indicated that some non-commercial media organizations want students who have higher degrees. Another thing that is considered is which university the students come from, which is related to the ideological studies. This is important for the non-commercial organizations.

4.2.3 Sub-question 2 conclusion

Practice takes priority for designing media curriculum, although, theory learning is also important in higher education media education. As our research participants said, media is a subject that has much applied learning. Instructors in schools of media tend to set the educational direction as "vocationalism." Based on their introduction, many kinds of practices are designed for students, including internship, practical projects within the curriculum and practical campus activities. However, there is still room for much improvement, especially having to do with the linking between practice within school and the real working experience. In addition, both the professors and professionals mentioned the phrase "low-threshold". It motivated them to think

about how to improve students' healthy competitive spirit throughout their media education. They indicated that interdisciplinary learning and continual learning might help in this.

4.3 "Sub-question 3: What might the underpinning values and beliefs be in Chinese media education in the future?"

4.3.1 Professors' opinions

In this section, I present the findings of professors' views towards the third sub research question. Some professors said that this research interview could be perceived as a review of their own current work. They found some parts were good; and more importantly, they found some problems that they said they would like to try to address for a better future. Their suggestions and ideas about future media education were interspersed throughout the research interviews. Based on the analysis of transcripts, I have put them into them into three parts. (See Table 2)

Table 2: Professors' suggestions for future higher education media education development

Curriculum	(1) Enhancing practice and professional skills learning (2) Improving Breadth courses (3) Balancing practice and theory learning in media education
Discipline	(1) Encouraging interdisciplinary learning (2) Developing media discipline to applied communication discipline (3) Improving the specialty of media education in each university
Values	(1) Communication learning (2) Having healthy or sound personality (3) Fostering morally sound values and outlook towards the world and life (4) Encouraging independence and initiative

Firstly, both practice and theory are important in higher education media education

curriculum. All the professors in this research attached importance to practice. Although media educators have continuously arranged practical courses and practical activities, there are still currently many problems (mentioned in Sub-questions 2: Professors' opinions). Enhancing the practical aspects in media education is important for the improvement of students' professional skills. When it comes to breadth courses, professors emphasized how important liberal arts learning in current media education is (mentioned in Sub-questions 1: Professors' opinions). This is something that cannot be ignored as media education carries on into the future. Furthermore, another important issue is the proper balancing of practice and theory in media education.

Secondly, media discipline still needs improvement. Hill hoped that media educators could improve interdisciplinary learning. In other words, he hoped that in the future, students would not put too much emphasis on any specific major within the media discipline. There are two reasons. (1) Hill stated

> "Students cannot just only focus on issues about the issues about media, and cannot stay boxed in to a narrow view. They should know that events that are presented in media are the things that are happening in their own society and globally. Students should have the consciousness to think about what is happening and why these things are happening. When you have this consciousness, you must learn knowledge in other fields, other than media." (see Appendix B-24 for original interview transcription)

(2) There are many employment options other than media organization for those coming out of media majors; and students will not need to emphasize that they are media professionals in the future. These views were expressed during discussion about what the purpose of media education is and what the purpose of higher education is. Hill deemed that

> "After students received higher education, they should have the ability to judge, which is in accord with the phrase 'self-determined' (mentioned in Sub-questions 1: Professors' opinions)". (see Appendix B-25 for original interview transcription)

About the purpose of future media educational development, Hongmeng mentioned that media permeates every field. In the future, there will be more amalgamations of other fields into media, such as New Media. The media discipline may penetrate into the applied communication disciplines. In addition, Hongmeng suggested that different universities should find their special pedagogies.

Thirdly, virtuous conduct was mentioned by all of the professors who took part in this research. This can be categorized into three parts: (a) Communication is an important part of media education. It may involve many communication theories that students should learn. (b) A healthy personality, reflecting such attributes as: responsibility, respect and honesty, is the precondition for all work. (c) Fostering morally sound values and outlook should be the mandate for students. (d) Independence and initiative in learning and working are the hopes that the professors mentioned they have for students. In general, this may include self-motivated learning, problem identification, and independent judgment.

4.3.2 Professionals' opinions

In this section, I present the findings of professionals' views towards the third sub research question. Concerning the future development of higher education media education, the professionals who participated in this research did not have a completely clear description. They did have a feeling for what should be changed and what should be improved, based on their work experience. Dada stated

> "I reviewed my learning in university. Except for the English and Politics courses, I do not think any courses that related to media professionals helped me in my upcoming work. The reason is that I think the media curriculum is so broad. I think those course do not have much of a practical effect. Media is not a theoretical discipline; it is a highly pragmatic one. It is an industry that changes very quickly. The things in the textbooks that

you are using now may become obsolete in five years. Media is an industry in the forefront of the age. It keeps changing. And you should continually face the new environment." (see Appendix B-26 for original interview transcription)

The curricula are so broad. It was difficult for the participants to say what they learned in university. Easy thought the curricula were copious and jumbled. Also, there seems to be no clearly cultivated direction in media education. Dada thought,

"Our media education is outdated theoretical education, even though the department's educational goal is focused on practice and employment." (see Appendix B-27 for original interview transcription)

A non-standardized curriculum plan results in an unsystematic curriculum arrangement in media education. Doji mentioned that students might very well become confused about what they have learned in university after completing the four years of learning.

Two professionals in this research expressed the hope that in the future, a specific subdivision in major at the third and fourth year of media education will be developed. Easy said there was no connection between what he learned in university and what he did in the workplace. When he was in university, his curricula were about various and sundry aspects of media. It seems that they knew a lot of things; but it was hard to say whether or not they could put any of them into application. He said it would have been better if he had had the chance to choose what he wanted to learn, such as the skills of radio, so that he may have concentrated on something to understand it deeper towards the end of his university career. Dada also said, at the third year of media education, students should be allowed to select a more specific learning direction, for example, sports news, children's programming, financial news or TV entertainment programing, but, she added, that students should receive breadth courses at the beginning for two years, including English and Philosophy. This would be a chance to guide students into good study

habits and to help them acquire the methodology of learning about the world.

The other two professionals had different ideas. Doji claimed

"Our theory learning in media education is strong. And most of the universities, especially the good universities, emphasize theory learning. We should keep on doing that. The part we should improve upon in the future is practice in media education. We always say theory guides the practice. But instructors do not tell us *how* to use the theories to guide practice. This is a failure in teaching." (see Appendix B-28 for original interview transcription)

And Yi stated

"Our media education is vocation-oriented education. I hope there could be more academic guidance, which could improve critical thinking ability. Media is an industry that is full of social significance. It has strong social influence. It is not just about learning a skill." (see Appendix B-29 for original interview transcription)

4.3.3 Sub-question 3 conclusion

Professors and professionals have different vantage points from which to foresee the development of higher education media education in the future. The former gave some suggestions, including discipline, curriculum and values in media education. The latter, analyzed, at length, the specific kinds of media education that would be needed throughout the entire 4 years of education. There were some suggestions given that were in consensus, such as improving breadth courses in media education and enhancing theory and practice learning. That said, two of the views seemed to be contradictory. (1) The professors suggested reducing the specific majors division, while two professionals hoped to have more specific subdivisions in the major at the third and fourth years of media education. (2) The professors preferred to broaden the range of knowledge learning, while the professionals complained that the arranged curricula are too broad to deeply learn the subjects. The following chapter will discuss more about these points.

Some more interpretation of the findings is needed to answer the main research question. This will be done after discussion on some points based on reviewing both the literature review and research data in Chapter 5. It will give forth more profound understanding.

5 Discussion

In this chapter, I discuss the meaning behind the findings. When I compared the professors' and professionals' opinions, I find some similarities and some differences. Because of their differing standpoints (academic and industry), their views that coincide strengthen the importance of the issues; the views that show dissimilarities present the variables of the issues. With the understanding of the theoretical framework in the literature review as a basis, there are three themes discussed: (1) Breadth course and media education in higher education, (2) Deep and broad learning in media education, (3) Challenges in higher education media education, (4) Vocationally-oriented media education.

Generally, it became obvious that the participating professionals did not have particularly deep understanding of the theory and practice in curriculum, while the participating professors have had much more pedagogies and academic thinking to support their review of the whole media education system. Then again, the professionals had both media education experience and real working experience. They knew what it takes to be successful in the media workplace. Based on their work experiences, they could select knowledge that they thought useful. Considering the needs of real media work, the critiques of the professors and the theoretical analyses of the scholars from the literature reviews, we will discuss the main question: "What are the values and beliefs underpinning higher education media education curriculum in Beijing, China?"

5.1 Breadth course and Media education

During the process of interviewing, I found that breadth courses in university was an aspect that some participants discussed when it comes to the improvement of media education. In

China, most of the courses are set and arranged by the department heads. Although students may select courses, the amount of curricula offered is limited. Both the participating professors and professionals pointed out they would like to see more curricula beyond the media-professional courses. In this section, I discuss the understanding of what a Breadth course is, the relationship between breadth course and media education, and the approaches to improve Breadth course in media education.

5.1.1 What is a Breadth course

Breadth courses refer to the courses that students must complete outside their individual major program. In western countries, completing breadth courses is one of the requirements for Bachelor's degree. Based on the "Proposal for New Breadth Requirement" published by the Arts & Science Faculty Council, University of Toronto, the purposes of required breadth courses are to encourage students "to explore new and different analytical and critical methods, in order to foster a broad understanding of the foundational concepts and approaches found in various areas of intellectual investigation", "to think critically about disciplinary boundaries", and "to appreciate the nature of interdisciplinary research" (2009, p.1). Some Chinese media educators have also provided a description about breadth courses: breadth courses is required to cultivate an "integrated human" who is not only a professional in one specific field but also a person endowed with a wide horizon, clear insight, spirit of liberal art education, and sound emotional development, strengthened through study of the humanities, natural sciences and social science (Tian, Yang & Chen, 2014).

5.1.2 The relationship between Breadth courses and Media education

Some of our research participants said breadth courses would help students to look at, understand and deal with issues, especially social issues, as a whole. In the literature review, I also mentioned breadth course in one of the six media education missions that I proposed - helping students expand their vision. Nothing exists independently. There are many internal or external connections that have reciprocal influence upon each other; this is especially true in media. Media professionals need to take many things into consideration, such as cultural, religious and political diversity. The breadth course provides the component in education that helps students broaden their professional frontiers, open their minds and have wide-ranging thinking.

Tian, Yang and Chen (2014) say that breadth courses could help students improve their comprehensive and integrated knowledge; they could be utilized to foster versatile and innovative media talents. It is crucial that every media producer should care about "People" and "Society" and, most importantly, have the ability to do that. In this research, some professors introduced approaches that their department undertook, adding breadth courses into media education; and both the professors and the professionals gave some suggestions about how to combine these two spheres in the future.

5.1.3 Improving Breadth courses in Media education

First of all, both educators and students should take notice of the importance of breadth course in higher education media education. Breadth courses are offered as public elective courses. Perhaps students could play a part in the choice selection, their choices stemming from their own interest from among the electives. However, two of the research participants worried

that if students chose only the courses that were easy among the courses that departments opened for them, their education would be inadequate. I think this concern might not be a problem for media education curriculum design; it is a general problem, however, throughout all types of education, including schooling, and parenting.

Secondly, more breadth course categories should be added for students to select from. Based on the findings of this research, we find only in some top comprehensive universities, public elective courses that are rich and varied, many credits being allotted for these courses. However, the limitation of categories among breadth courses is an obvious problem for many other universities that may lack teachers and funding. When I was in university, I had the chance to select the courses from other schools; however, there were too few seats to grab.

Thirdly, educators should balance professional courses and breadth courses in a judicious fashion. Chinese higher education media education is vocation oriented. Do professionally related courses have the priority in the arrangement of media education curriculum? How should the proportion of the breadth courses and the professional courses be allocated? Although some breadth courses are provided in media related university education, there are still some problems that need to be discussed. For example, which ones should be added? What criteria should media educators use to evaluate each course's importance?

As discussed in the literature review, "helping students expand their view" is a mission for media educators. This part (see section 2.2.3 - (5) Helping students expand their view) includes three parts: (1) systematic media learning; (2) interdisciplinary learning; (3) social context learning. During the interviews performed in this research, each of the participants mentioned all three, especially the second point – interdisciplinary learning. In China,

interdisciplinary learning is the obvious representation of breadth courses (Tian, Yang and Chen, 2014), which means broadening the categories of curriculum. However, some of the research participants, especially from among the professionals, mentioned that if the curriculum is too broad, the understanding is at risk of becoming too shallow (the attainment of true knowledge being not deep enough). Therefore, the following questions emerged: Should media education be broad or deep? Could media education be both broad and deep? Are broad and deep antonyms in media education?

5.2 Deep and broad learning in media education

Confusion exists about whether the curriculum should be broad or deep. On the one hand, according to much research done by Chinese media educators, media education (especially curriculum) is complicated, comprehensive and broad (Wang, 2013; Yao, 2005; Dai, 2010; Liu, 2011; Tian, Yang & Chen, 2014). Meanwhile, some participants in this research proposed broadening the curriculum selection variety even more, with the exception of professional courses. On the other hand, three of the professionals in our research mentioned that they felt curriculum is too broad to learn anything well. Each of these three said that the broadening causes an attainment of superficial knowledge rather than a more profound learning of the subject. With that in mind, should media education be broadened or deepened? Before answering this question, we should divide media education curriculum into two types: professional media courses and non-professional media courses. Both of these have different learning significances and goals, which may lead to different curriculum designs.

5.2.1 *Professional media courses*

Students should have a deep understanding of both theory and practice learned in professional courses. As listed in the literature review, there are several basic professional skills that students need to acquire during their media education, including: media writing, information gathering, aesthetic sensibility (or visual literacy), professional identification (or the ability to identify career position and understand professional missions), communication competence, management, and operation of the media and techniques (Oregon Report, 1987; Christ, 1997; Finn, 2007; Rubin &Rubin, 1997; Sherman, 1997; Dickson, 1997; Lee, 2010; Yang, 2013). Some of these skills, such as aesthetic sensibility, cannot be gained if students only learn superficial professional knowledge. Also, fostering critical thinking and creative thinking in media education needs to be based on the improvement of deep understanding and flexible using of knowledge.

In this research, our participants also stressed the need for deep understanding of professional knowledge. During the interviews, the professionals suggested two ways for media educators to improve their professional courses in university by including more practices within the curriculum and by providing more social practice opportunities for students, such as internships. Both of these means would help students attain a deeper and more comprehensive grasp of theories and help them to master professional skills. The professionals taking part in this research all felt that the skills that they learned during their media education have been helpful in their careers. In addition to that they all wish to obtain deeper understanding of new information in the field. For example, as they learn the manipulation of digital media software, additional practical projects may help them improve their hands-on competence and utilization of the

digital media technique. This would be similar to the "project-led problem-solving" that Hanney (2013) mentioned about improving media practice in curriculum.

5.2.2 *Non-professional media courses*

Broad disciplinary learning should be encouraged in media education. Deep professional media learning not augmented with anything else, cannot totally meet the needs of society. Based on the discussion in section 5.1, current Chinese media education needs to be somehow amalgamated with breadth courses. However, it is difficult to evaluate which discipline other than media-related would be most useful for media majors. If the department arranges all of the courses, students must accept those courses. How do schools ascertain students' needs and interests? If students were to have an opportunity to select and arrange their own courses, would they know which ones are more important? Students should understand why the need for liberal arts is vital; discover what they want to learn, and what they want to do with their knowledge in the future. Teachers have the responsibility to help students and guide them to deal with these challenges.

In addition, some participants mentioned that achieving a second major could be encouraged. They said that for media students, a second discipline could be chosen from among, Law, Politics, Economics or Arts, which could be selected, based on students' own needs. This seems reasonable and might improve interdisciplinary study. However, there are still many majors within the larger discipline. What are the criteria of selecting majors? How much would the second major contribute toward the students' future? Different disciplines have different ways of thinking. Compared with students who only have one major, how would the students with two majors arrange their time for the two different fields of knowledge learning? Would the

outcome be as good as students who only have one focus major? I cannot deny that the second degree could strengthen students' competitive edge in society, especially students in the media industry. However, the many challenges need to be discussed before we encourage students to select second degree at their university.

5.3 Challenges in media education

I summarized six missions of media education within my study of the literature review – developing professionalism, fostering critical thinking, encouraging creative thinking, motivating continual learning, helping students expand their perspectives, and establishing media ethics. Each of has had much examination by many media scholars who have explained for each of these missions: "what it is", "why it is important" and "how to achieve it." There is no question about the need to define what each one is and why it is important. However, when it comes to "how to achieve it", I think, based on data findings, Chinese higher education media education faces many challenges. There are three themes discussed below that address this: low-threshold, learning in school and at work and internship.

5.3.1 Low-threshold

Based on what we learned from the research interviews, most of the participants critiqued practice within the field of media. "Low-threshold" is the phrase that they used to describe that it is easy to obtain professional skills, in order to work in the media industry. Based on research data, Dada concluded that a person could become a professional in the media with no more than three months' training. However, if professional skills are easy to learn, why do media educators give practice the priority in curriculum? What do students learn over the course of their four

years, if media industry has such a low-threshold? If it only takes a few months to learn, why is media education in university designed for four years? Literature review establishes the many professional skills: media writing, information gathering, aesthetic sensibility (or visual literacy), professional identification (or identifying career position and understanding professional missions), communication competence, management, and operation of the media and techniques (Oregon Report, 1987; Christ, 1997; Finn, 2007; Rubin &Rubin, 1997; Sherman, 1997; Dickson, 1997; Lee, 2010; Yang, 2013). Could these skills be learned within three months? Does the accumulated worth of them equal "Professionalism"?

Vocational training and professional training are different. Media professional practice refers to an "extended training, a high standard of ethics, specialized knowledge and expertise" (Hanney, 2013, p.45), while vocational training "provides trade skills for workers to earn a living" (Lee, 2008, p.59). According to what participants in this research said, "no more than three months" may be enough for students to then be able to get media-related jobs. But "three months" may be not enough for students to become trained professionals. As was mentioned in the literature review, an excellent professional practitioner not only needs "craft skills" which comprise "the ability to manipulate technology, tools and equipment in synthesis with the application of theoretical knowledge" (Hanney, 2013, p.46), but also "a high level of specialist theoretical knowledge across a broad range of subjects" (Hanney, p.46). When we describe the specialty of media education, we should think about what would provide this high level of knowledge across a broad range of subjects.

5.3.2 Learning in school and at work

All of the professors in this research commented about the tendency among students to

not have a spirit of independence and also that some may even lack the initiative to learn and apply themselves. We may also find that the current educational beliefs and goals set some restrictions for students, which may contribute to the limiting of students' capacity to judge or make coherent decisions.

In China, education itself, and therefore, the students, tend to be quite exam-oriented. Because of the large population, most classroom environments consist of the large-class lecture hall (Li & Yang, 2010) and the main means of assessment in Chinese education is the paper test, especially during primary and secondary education. The most well-known and important exam in China is the University Entrance Examination that takes place from June 5th to June 7th each year. Getting high scores in the CUEE is sought after by all students. Students should contemplate the following questions. Why do you want high scores? Is it to enter a good university? Why do you want to enter a good university? Do you want to gain a good education or find a good job? Do you study because it is a task assigned by parents and teachers, or is it a self-motivated desire? When I was in high school, my classmates always would ask, "Why do we have to learn all this? Beside the purpose of getting high scores on the exams, how will all this material benefit our future?" In this research, three of the professionals mentioned that when they graduated from university, they did not really know what they had learned over the past four-year period.

Among the six media forms of educational missions that were determined in the literature review (see section 2.2.3), critical thinking, creative thinking and continual learning are the three kinds of perceptions that cannot be improved within one curriculum. Hanney (2013) mentions that "self-directive, creative and innovative learners" are those "who, through an encounter with problems that challenge their existing knowledge, ideas and briefs, are able to create new

knowledge" (p.49). Independent thinking and self-motivated learning are two basic abilities that students can use to constantly improve their critical, creative and continual thinking.

According to the literature review, critical thinking required students to process information logically and actively (Hanks & Ruminski, 1997; Blanckard & Christ, 1993). Creative thinking challenges not only students' current knowledge and experience, but it is also students' ability to use the knowledge they have gained from theory and experience creatively. The demands of both theory and practice learning in higher education media education require that students have good judgement and can make decisions based on their own needs and interests. If university students only follow teachers' orders and cram for exams, how could they learn? Educators may do well to consider why students are educated in this way. The fostering of those two abilities - independent thinking and self-motivated learning - should be stressed in each step of education. Both teachers and parents should encourage students to use their own judgment and make their own decisions.

5.3.3 Internship

Internship is an important practical activity in higher education media education. As Blanchard and Christ (1993) explained, "by providing students with work in media outlets along with the self-reflective, questioning aspects of an academic context, students are able to get first-hand knowledge for evaluating their own interest and passions" (p.118). In this research, I asked participants what their views were on internship. Both the professors and professionals confirmed the necessity. Furthermore, they hoped that educators in schools of media could provide more intern opportunities for students.

Table 1 in Chapter 4 (see section 4.2.2) presents aspects of interns' work in Beijing media

organizations. It shows that most interns found their work via individual request. At the beginning, I questioned all the interviewees about practice in media education; their responses showed that all of the participants thought there was a gap between schooling and real life work. One professor mentioned practice in university should make a stronger connection with the workplace. What are the schools actually doing along these lines?

However, when it comes to independent thinking and self-motivated learning, I found, surprisingly, that this phenomenon might have a promising path. Students know their needs and try to find the opportunities by themselves. Although they may have different purposes for seeking internship, they seem to have a favourable attitude towards independence and taking initiative for their own learning.

In the light of data and literature review, it seems that, in general, media education in higher education faces many challenges now and will in the future. Different eras have different challenges. It seems easy to understand the reasoning and substance of learning; but it is hard to find proper approaches to achieve educational goals. Education is not just about book learning.

5.4 Vocationally-oriented media education

In the beginning of this research, two big problems were mentioned that are being discussed these days among the Chinese media educators – discipline setting and educational orientation. During the research interviews, I asked our participants what their thoughts were about these problems. About the general goal of higher education media education, each participant thought that current media education in Chinese higher education is vocation-oriented. Vocation-oriented media education is not equal to vocational training within media education. I wondered what the differences were between vocational training and professional

training. As Hanney (2013) said, media professional practice refers to an "extended training, a high standard of ethics, specialized knowledge and expertise" (p.45). However, vocational training "provides trade skills for workers to earn a living" (Lee, 2008, p.59). An excellent professional practitioner needs not only "craft skills", that is, have "the ability to manipulate technology, tools and equipment in synthesis with the application of theoretical knowledge" (Hanney, p.46), but also have "a high level of specialist theoretical knowledge across a broad range of subjects" (p.46).

In this research, we found that although the final purpose of higher education media education is employment, the detailed requirements within media education, which ware analyzed in this research, belong to professional training. Both the professors and professionals interviewed in this research felt that there should be more practice in curriculum: the former focused on finding more social practices for students; the latter emphasized adding more practical courses to curriculum. When it comes to the theory learning, participants in this research all felt there was needed more non-professional theory curriculum, such as the breadth courses, to be included in media education. About the discipline setting, each of the participants provided views based on their own experience. Although this topic may involve many variables, the participants reminded us to look at media education creatively, rather than follow only one developmental route. It is not that easy to change the whole current educational system; but at least people who care about media education understand what they should do and what parts need to be improved. At least, people are not indifferent to the development of media education.

6 Conclusion and implications

6.1 Main research question

To answer the main question, "What are the values and beliefs underpinning higher education media education curriculum in Beijing, China?" After having reviewed the literature, research findings and discussion, I would like to present some reflections on the main research question.

6.1.1 The goal of media education

In general, all of the research participants said that higher education media education in China tends to be vocationally oriented. This means that employment is the educational goal of media majors. However, none of those interviewed viewed the goal of these students as a menial workers or mere technicians. Rather their hope was that the media student would become a craftsman who could use skills innovatively and critically, with a good sense of analysis. Even though the final purpose of media education is employment, to the research participants, media education does not mean that students are educated merely with the goal of earning a living after graduation. The deeper goal is to foster a master or an expert. In other words, professional training, which refers to an "extended training, a high standard of ethics, specialized knowledge and expertise" (Hanney, 2013, p.45), is the requirement in Chinese vocation-oriented media education.

6.1.2 Focus of curriculum

Currently, professional theory learning and practice are the main content of curriculum. However, based on literature review and research findings, some improvement is needed to

augment current curriculum. About practice learning, some of the professors said that they would like to find more social practice opportunities, such as internships, for students, which may help students to have more hands-on experience. Also, the experience in the workplace could also inspire students to think about what capacities they will really need, when they leave school and enter the real world. About theory learning, many suggestions were given during the interviews such as the linking of breadth courses with media education. Proficiency in breadth courses could enrich students' abilities and give them a broader perspective with which to view issues in different ways.

6.1.3 Social needs

Based on the research findings, I found that society needs their media professionals to have a broad view, rich knowledge, strong learning capacity, good use of professional skills, fine communication ability and high morals. Those points match the six higher education media educational missions that I summarized in the literature review, which includes (1) developing professional skills, (2) fostering critical thinking, (3) encouraging creative thinking, (4) motivating continual learning, (5) helping students to expanding their vision, and (6) establishing media ethics. Referring to curriculum focus, deep learning in professional skills, including profound professional theory comprehension and practical professional skills usage; and broad study in non-professional knowledge, including breadth courses and social practices – are crucial for the capabilities and expertise that society needs.

6.1.4 Pedagogy

It is hard to determine what the pedagogy is in current higher education media education.

The research shows it currently is not what the participating professors and professionals preferred: learner-centered media education. Perhaps this situation is in the process of transforming for the better. Both professors and professionals hoped that students will be able to investigate judge, choose, solve problems, and make decisions by themselves, instead of blindly following or merely relying on instructors' direction.

6.2 Significance of this study

My conclusion in answering the main research question (see section 6.1) is that media education is still a new field in Chinese higher education. This implies that there will be many opportunities and challenges. All of the improvement measures for media education are rooted in what values and beliefs we already have. Instead of fighting with the status quo in current media education, media educators, as well as students in the schools of media could become more aware of the problems and challenges in current media education curriculum and pedagogy and establish open discussion and search for solutions.

This research hopefully will contribute toward that communication within media field. Firstly, we could receive more than one perspectives towards the same question through the different views given by the participants. I have mentioned my own experience at the beginning of this thesis. This study also fulfilled my need to communicate with persons in the media field; furthermore, it helped me deeply contemplate the puzzling issues.

Secondly, we could decipher some issues that were not gleaned from the interviews. Those eight participants had different experiences during different periods of their lives, giving them richer perspectives. For example, the four professionals who took part in this research had been undergraduates in media schools; two of whom had experienced working in both

commercial and non-commercial media organizations in Beijing. Another example is that one of the professors had more than 10 years working experience in the media industry. Their rich experiences could enable them to critique media education in creative ways, and they could put forth some new ideas that might help people to have a more holistic view towards current media education in Chinese higher education.

Thirdly, participating in this study was a chance for interviewees to communicate with themselves. Some participants had mentioned that, one of the reason why they wanted to take part in this research was that they hoped the interview might offer them an opportunity to review their own study or work. Perhaps, they hoped that they could possibly find fresh, new ideas and understandings after participating in this research that might be good for their current work.

Based on the reflections on the first and second sub-research questions (see section 4.1 and 4.2), those eight participants provided several significant suggestions for the development of media education in Chinese higher education (see section 4.3). However, considering China's big population, eight people's opinions might not be enough to determine all the issues. Media is not a machine that can be moved by power nor designed by a complicated formula, nor is it comprised of materials. Media professionals must fathom many concepts, not only in media bust also in other fields. One media production contains (among other things) the producers' attitudes, beliefs and culture that are invisible, non-computable or even possibly unintentionally. Media permeates through each part of life. Considerably more work will need to be done to examine the factors that influence the development of media education. The media industry is changing continually, and education needs to follow suit. This research is to serve as a base for future studies.

6.3 Future research

6.3.1 Technology

As presented in the findings, I found both the professors and professionals mentioned media technology in the examples they gave, and also used media terminology when responding to the interviewer's questions. At the onset of this thesis, I mentioned that I faced some problems about media technology based on my own experience. Although technology is not the core subject in this research, there are some technological topics that could be discussed in future research.

Based on the findings of this research, I have concluded three themes:

The first theme addresses the balancing of practice and theory learning in media technology curriculum. The eight participants interviewed spoke about the relationship between practice and theory in media education. We cannot ignore that each kind of curriculum has its own teaching methodology. How the relationship between practice and theory works in media technology curriculum could be discussed in future research.

The second theme is technique learning within media technology curriculum. There is a topic that I discussed in this research: *Technique in the field* of *media: Low-threshold* (see section 4.1.2, section 4.2.2 and section 5.3.1). Does the phenomenon "low-threshold" exist in the area of media technology? Using media technology is not merely clicking buttons. The producing of a great media product is not only about using high-technology but also about creative thinking which includes two aspects: creative designing and "creative problem solving" (Hanney, 2013, p. 46) (see section 2.2.3 - (3) Encouraging creative thinking). This theme is also related to the relationship of practice and theory learning in media technology.

The third theme is the updating of the media technology related knowledge in media education. Media develops rapidly in China. One of the research participants, Easy, found that the media technology that he learned in school was not widely applied on the job. There is a gap between schooling and the real work. When it comes to the updating of media technology related knowledge in media education, several aspects should be taken into consideration, such as replacement of media facilities, school funding and teacher resources. Learning how to deal with those problems may contribute to the bridging of the gap between schooling and the real work in the area of media technology.

6.3.2 Media qualification certification

In both the literature review and my own research findings, I uncovered many challenges facing media education in higher education. Firstly, in China, with increasing numbers of enrolment, there are about thirty thousand students graduate from schools of media each year (Chen, 2013). The number of students in media schools has increased 15 times over the course of the past ten years. Is there an efficient way to prove the media study outcomes in media education? Secondly, both the professors and the professionals, who took part in this research, mentioned an existing gap between schooling and real world work. According to the findings in this research, although many students arrange internships to get a chance to be involved in the industry before they enter it; the gap still exists. How do teachers evaluate their students' internships? Perhaps there should be a form of media qualification certification required that denotes that the student has reached a professional standard showing that he or she is ready for work in media.

There is no current unified and integrated standard that exists to control and assess the

quality of media employees in China. I think media professionals need to meet a standard to show they are qualified. Although some certificate programs exist that are open for media staff to take, it is not enough. For example, there is a Mandarin Level Test in China, which is set not only for news anchors; people going after a "teaching certificate" need also to take this test. Another example is the governmental "Press Card" exam for people who want to be journalists, but how about other standardized tests for other media work?

Media qualification certification could be an integrated test that assesses not only professional skills and theories but also media ethics. There is a situation in China that some students in schools of media are focused more on their appearance than the quality of their work. Obviously, media education in higher education should not be a "super star factory". Media professionals have their own responsibilities to their jobs, no matter which aspect of media they are aiming for. If they want to work in the media industry, there should be some kind of institutional approval that they need to pass that assesses their basic qualities.

The assessment mode within the media qualification certification could be a series of tests or a comprehensive test. It could also be divided into different categories by specialty. I think it should be a requirement for fostering students' professionalism and establishing their media ethics.

6.3.3 Curriculum design

It is a fact, in Chinese universities, that, department heads or administrators arrange most of the curricula in their own media school. Why is it they who are in charge of setting up the courses? In this research, three of the professionals mentioned that when they graduated, before starting on the job, it was hard for them to tell what they learned in their four years of education.

At the same time, all of the professionals in the research found that the information in some

courses became very important to them after they started working, and that they were unaware of

it's importance when they were taking those courses. Why does this happen? Do students not

understand the significance of the arrangement of their courses? Do students not understand why

they have to take the assigned courses?

In addition, the professors involved in this research encourage learner-centered education.

Maybe, the students themselves could determine what courses to take in the university of the

future. However, if students were to have the power to select most of their courses, how would

they know what would be the best choices for their future careers as well as their own

enrichment? What would the teachers' responsibilities be in this? Future research needs to be

designed to explore these questions. Perhaps, students and teachers need to communicate better

with one another and enhance their mutual understanding. Perhaps, both teachers and students

need to be open to receive different and new thinking.

My parents never wanted to throw out our first television that is older than me. That

television may have represented something sentimental to them. For me, every time I saw it, I

would remember my childhood and it would remind me to keep pursuing my dream.

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Appendixes

Appendix A: Research Interview Questions

Each participant was given in five kinds of guiding questions: general questions, group specific questions, "Theory" questions, "Practice" questions and relationship questions between theory and practice. They were divided based on the main research question and its sub-questions: What are the values and beliefs underpinning higher education media education curriculum in Beijing, China? – (a) What are the value and beliefs of theory underpinning media education curriculum in Beijing, China? (b) What are the values and beliefs of practice underpinning media education curriculum in Beijing, China? (c) What might the underpinning are values and beliefs be Chinese media education curriculum in the future?

每一组采访对象有 5 类引导问题:常规问题、组内特殊问题,"理论"相关问题, "实践"相关问题和关于理论和实践之间的关系的问题。这些问题的设定基于本次研究的 主要问题和次问题:什么样的价值标准和信念是中国北京传媒教育课程的支柱?--(1) 什么样的理论的价值标准和信念是中国北京传媒教育课程的支柱?(2)什么样的实践的 价值标准和信念是中国北京传媒教育课程的支柱?(3)未来将支撑传媒教育课程的价值 标准和信念是什么?

Professors:

教授:

(General questions)

(常规问题)

What qualities do you think a good media staff should have?

你认为一位合格的传媒工作者应具备什么样的素质?

Why choose those qualities?

为什么选择这些素质和能力?

How would you suggest to improve those qualities?

如何提高这些能力呢?

(Group specific questions)

(组内特殊问题)

1. How do you evaluate your students?

1. 你如何评价你的学生?

2. Do you think the current media education meets the needs of the media industry?

2. 你认为现在的传媒教育是否满足了传媒业的需求?

3. According to the media education in your School of Media, in general, what is good and what needs to be improved?

3. 对于你们的学院的传媒教育而言,总的来说,好的地方是什么,还有哪些地方需要改进 和提高的?

("Theory" questions)

("理论"相关问题)

1. How do you define the meaning of "theory"?

1.你认为什么是"理论"?

2. What is the purpose of learning theory?

2.理论学习的目的是什么?

3. What role do theories play in the process of learning in media education?

3. 理论学习在传媒教育中扮演着什么样的角色?

4. How many courses are designed for theory learning?

4. 有多少课程是为理论学习而设定的?

4.1. What are you feelings about the learning content and time? Is there enough, lacking or excessive?

4.1. 请问您如何评价理论学习的内容和时间?足够的、缺乏的或者过量的?

4.2. What are the outcomes of the theory learning?

4.2. 这些理论学习最后会有什么样的效果?(或带来什么样的结果?)

5. What theories are the core theories in media education curriculum?

5.传媒教育课程中的核心理论是什么?

6. Are there any theories being added or removed every year?

6. 是否每一年都有一些理论被加入到课程中或者被从课程中删除?

6.1 If yes, what are they?

6.1 如果是,分别什么?

6.2 If no, why?

6.2 如果不是,为什么?

("Practice" questions)

("实践"相关问题)

1. How do you define the meaning of "practice"?

1.你认为什么是"实践"?

2. What is the purpose of practice in media education?

2.实践的目的是什么?

3. What role does practice play in the process of learning in media education?

3."实践"在传媒教育中扮演着什么样的角色?

4. How many courses are designed for practical training?

4. 有多少课程是为实践培训而设定的?

4.1. What are you feeling about the learning content and time? Is it enough, lacking or excessive?

4.1. 请问您如何评价实践的内容和时间?足够的、缺乏的或者过量的?

4.2. What are the outcomes of the practices?

4.2.这些实践最后会有什么样的效果?(或带来什么样的结果?)

5. What practices are the core practices in media education curriculum?

5.传媒教育课程中的主要的实践项目是什么?

6. Are there any practices being added or removed every year?

6. 是否每一年都有一些实践项目被加入到课程中或者被从课程中删除?

6.1 If yes, what are they?

6.1 如果是,分别什么?

6.2 If no, why?

6.2 如果不是,为什么?

(Relationship questions between theory and practice)

(关于理论和实践之间的关系的问题)

1. Which one influence students or their study more? Practice or theory?

1. 理论和实践,哪一个对学生和他们的学习影响更大一些?

2. What do you think the relationship is between theories and practical learning in media education?

2. 你认为理论和实践的学习在传媒教育中的关系是什么?

3. Do you think media education in China is vocational oriented or an academic study?

3. 你认为中国的传媒教育是一种以职业为导向的学习还是一种学术性的研究学习?

3.1. How do you critique this trend?

3.1 你如何评价这一趋势?这一趋势对于中国传媒的发展有好处吗?

3.2 Is it good for Chinese media development? Why?

3.2 这一趋势对于中国传媒的发展有好处吗?为什么?

4. What is the purpose of Chinese media education in the future?

4. 你认为未来中国传媒教育的目标是什么?

Professionals:

从业者:

(General questions)

(常规问题)

What qualities do you think a good media staff should have?

你认为一位合格的传媒工作者应具备什么样的素质?

Why choose those qualities?

为什么选择这些素质和能力?

How would you suggest to improve those qualities?

如何提高这些能力呢?

(Group specific questions)

(组内特殊问题)

1. What are the differences between real work and schooling? (How to bridge the gap? – Ask when needed)

1. 实际的传媒工作和学校的传媒教育之间有什么不同?(如何缩小他们之间的差距?——需要的时候再问)

2. Do you think the current media education meets the needs of media industry?

2. 你认为现在的传媒教育是否满足了传媒业的需求?

3. Which parts of current media education are good and which parts need to be improved?

3. 就现有的传媒教育而言,哪一部分是好的,哪一部分需要改进?

("Theory" questions)

("理论"相关问题)

1. How do you define the meaning of "theory" from your view?

1.从你的角度来说,什么是"理论"?

2. What is the purpose of learning theory?

2.理论学习的目的是什么?

3. What role does media theories play in the real work of media industry?

3. 传媒相关理论在传媒业的实际工作中扮演什么样的角色?

4. What theory is useful in real work?

4. 哪些理论对于实际工作的是有用的?

5. Did you learn theories after you graduated or in the process of working?

5.请问你毕业之后还有学习理论知识吗?工作的过程中还有学习理论知识吗?

5.1 What theories & why?

5.1 分别是什么样的理论?为什么要学习他们?

5.2 Why learn more?

5.2 为什么还要学习更多的理论知识?

("Practice" questions)

("实践"相关问题)

1. How do you define the meaning of "practice" from your view?

1.从你的角度来说,什么是"实践"?2. What is the purpose of practice?

2.实践的目的是什么?

3. What role does school's practice play in the real work of the media industry?

3. 学校中的实践在传媒业的实际工作中扮演什么样的角色?

4. What practice is useful in real work?

4. 哪些实践对于实际工作的是有用的?

5.What do you think is the purpose of an internship?

5. 你认为实习的目的是什么?

5.1. How many students participate in the internship each year in your institution?

5.1. 每年有多少学生参加实习工作?

5.2. What year were most of the interns in?

5.2. 哪一个年级的学生比较多?

5.3. What kind of internship do most of them take – compulsory schooling requirement or

private/ individual request?

5.3. 你认为大多数人实习类型是什么——学校要求还是个人需求?

6. Are you satisfied with the new interns that come on the job at your place of employment?

6. 你对现在的实习生的工作满意吗?你对现在的新来的人员的工作满意吗?

6.1 What good qualities do they have?

6.1 他们拥有的好的素质是什么?

6.2 Where do you think they should improve?

6.2 你认为他们哪一方面需要提高?

(Relationship questions between theory and practice)

(关于理论和实践之间的关系的问题)

1. Which one influences real work more? Practice or theory?

1. 理论和实践的学习,哪一个对实际工作的影响更大一些?

2. What do you think the relationship is between theory and practice?

2. 你认为理论和实践的关系是什么?

3. Do you think media education in China is vocationally oriented or an academic study?

3. 你认为中国的传媒教育是一种以职业为导向的学习还是一种学术性的研究学习?

3.1. How do you critique this trend?

3.1 你如何评价这一趋势?这一趋势对于中国传媒的发展有好处吗?

3.2 Is it good for Chinese media development? Why?

3.2 这一趋势对于中国传媒的发展有好处吗?为什么?

4. What is the purpose of Chinese media education in the future?

4. 你认为未来中国传媒教育的目标是什么?

Appendix B: Excerpts of Interview Transcripts

In this research, the semi-structured interviews were conducted in Mandarin. I translated some of the interview transcripts into English and used them in the data analysis. In Appendix B, I list the excerpts that were used in this research in both English and Simplified Chinese.

1. Interview Participants: Hongmeng (Group Professors)

"transcend beyond the major and support students to investigate other courses."

"(所谓通识教育就是)打通学科的界限，让他可以，跨学科去做一些选课。"

2. Interview Participant: Qian (Group Professors)

"Media is something that communicates with people, because you deliver people's issues, needs and hopes through media platforms. You should know the philosophical principles that guide human beings. In this connection, Chinese traditional culture, which is called Wulun (the five relationships among persons, comprising the primary the principles of Confucianism) can be seen as very important. Principally, if you understand the rules, in other words, have common sense, this will guide you to be able to judge and find the nature of things."

"我们这个传媒，它主要就是，还是跟人打交道的。因为，你是把他们的人和事，他们的需求他们的愿望，通过媒体的形式表达出来。那你要了解做人的规律。做人的这个规律呢，其实就是我们中国传统文化很重要的一点，叫做伦常大道。就是"五伦"关系。…你要是理解了这个规律，理解了这个道，就是常理嘛，常道，那这个就是说，就可以知道你的实践，可以指导你的判断事实的规律。就是我们要对事物进行判断。…之后你就能找到事物的本质。"

3. Interview Participant: KK (Group Professors)

"Students should have the ability to manage their emotions. When they face difficulties, they should be able to control their mood, keep calm and carry on. Now, people always have much pressure in life. There are some conflicts and choices on the job. So we should manage emotion well. When we face those pressures, we should be able to deal with them."

"就是要有良好的情绪管理的能力。比如说，遇到挫折啊，能不能坚持下去。现在心理压力都非常大，工作中会有一些冲突，抉择，所以呢我们要有良好的情绪的管理。面临压力的时候，我们能够应对这种压力。"

4. Interview Participant: Qian (Group Professors)

"Students always write something that they consider funny or stimulating, or that cater to others' views. Our purpose of education is not to just to cater to others, but to guide them with right concepts."

"他们都觉得好玩的就写，刺激人的就可以写，或者说，迎合大家口味的东西就去写，但是这个并不是我们教育的目的啊，教育的目的不是为了去迎合的，而是应该去引导。用正确的理念去引导。"

5. Interview Participant: Professors

"The main purpose of learning theory is to guide practice."
Theory is used to solve the practical issues."
The outcome of theory learning is evaluated in the process of doing practical work."
Theory helps people stand on the shoulders of those who came before and take a step further."
Theory guide students to better understand their work in the future."

"理论学习的主要目的是指导实践。"
理论可以用来解决实际的问题。"
理论可以用来检验实践。"
理论的话是让我们能够站在别人的肩膀上，能够看的更深，看得更远。就是基于前任的基础，我们能够往上，走的更高一点，走的更远一点。"
它（理论）还是能指导你以后在做职业的时候来有一个方向性的认识。"

6. Interview Participant: KK (Group Professors)

"Undergraduate education is to cultivate application-type personnel, while graduates need more research ability. For the undergrads, if they do not have enough practical skills, it is hard for them to improve in theories."

"本科生更多的是培养一种应用型的人才。研究生的话可能更多的是需要有一定的研究能力的吧。因为本科生，当他实践技能还不行得时候，理论上，他也很难上升。"

7. Interview Participant: Hongmeng (Group Professors)

"Professional media learning may be circumscribed, but theory learning is borderless."

"专业学习可以有限，但是理论学习是没有边界的。"

8. Interview Participant: Hongmeng (Group Professors)

"Knowledge's framework should be constructed and expanded within practice."

"他一定是围绕着你的实践去扩展自己的知识体系和知识范围。"

9. Interview Participant: Hill (Group Professors)

"When we use theory in practice, we may create a new understanding".

你在实践的过程中，你会发现，你可以对理论进行有重新的认识。"

10. Interview Participant: Dada (Group Professionals)

"The reason why theory is important is because theories help us to look at a field logically and systematically."

"为什么要存在一个理论就是要帮助你有逻辑，有体系的去看待一个事情。"

11. Interview Participant: Doji (Group Professionals)

"At the beginning of work, theory that students learn in university cannot guide practice, at least for me."

我觉得最开始理论还指导不了实践，就是在工作前期。至少从我的工作经历来说，对我来说没有多大意义。

12. Interview Participant: Doji (Group Professionals)

"Theory helps students to know and judge the issues and society… Anyone can decide what they think is good. One of the differences is that media professionals learn professional vocabulary. Although the public does not use professional vocabulary, they are still able to evaluate for themselves if the media product is good or not. Along these same lines, a student can learn all the theory in the world but not be able to create great media product."

"理论知识是指导我们去评价和认识这个社会的…大家都会评价,他能说出来好或者不好，可能就是不能用专业术语来帮助他表达，那你可能比他强一点的是，你学了之后， 你用专业术语来支撑，但是他没有学，完全不影响他对于这个事情的好坏评价。就是学了理论知识，你会发现，其实自己去做的时候也不一定能做好。"

13. Interview Participant: Easy (Group Professionals)

"Our media organization represents the nation's attitude, and we cannot make any mistakes in politics."

（我们）是代表国家立场的媒体，不允许你出任何政治方面的偏差和错误。

14. Interview Participant: KK (Group Professors)

"My students do not have any problem learning; the problem is with acquiring skills. They need have a more diligent working spirit and a more proactive attitude. Some of them lack of initiative".

"我觉得我的学生整体还不错吧。第一就是说，他们在知识学习上问题不是很大。在技能学习上呢，就是说，我觉得还需要有进一步的吃苦的精神。进一步积极地态度。有些学生可能现在主动性还不够强。"

15. Interview Participant: Hongmeng (Group Professors)

"[Fostering] the talents needed in journalism and communication can be accomplished by training the students' practical abilities".

"所以新闻传播人才(培养)，实际上是一种实践能力的训练。"

16. Interview Participant: KK (Group Professors)

"More people are needed to do the practical activities and deal with the actual issues. Those people do not have to receive graduate education."

"我觉得更多的人需要从事实践活动。解决实际的问题。这一部分人，不见得就要读研究生。"

17. Interview Participant: Hill (Group Professors)

"The top universities enrol excellent students; do they just direct their help to find those good students jobs?"

"在那些最精英的学校里面,你把全国最好的学生都罗来了，你就让他找个工作啊？"

18. Interview Participant: Yi (Group Professionals)

"Actually, the skills that we learned in school are comprehensive, such as how to write News, what we should notice in News writing, what the process of data collection is and how to report catastrophic news. But you do not have enough mastery to apply these skills on the job."

"其实我觉得学校教我们的东西挺完善的他从技能上到，比如说新闻稿怎么写，应该注意什么，调查取证的过程，灾难性报道。真正去做的话，你会觉得哪一样都做不好。"

19. Interview Participant: Dada (Group Professionals)

"As long as you make them happy, they can do it well."

只要你让他们很开心，他们就可以干的很好。

20. Interview Participant: Doji (Group Professionals)

"The threshold is not high for the requirement of skills; but one should learn the field and gain deeper capacity, if he/she wants to have good media products, like documentary or programs."

"这个对于技术的要求准入门开并不是很高。但是要是把他做成我们理解上的很厉害很有深度的新闻专题片，或者是栏目，那可能就需要我们在某一方面有一些升入的学习。"

21. Interview Participant: Doji (Group Professionals)

"Media professionals are the people who are in the avant-garde of the age. They should be continually learning, continually open to new things, and continually improving their insight."

"媒体人他们接触到这个社会最前沿的东西，而且每个人都是在不断地提高自己学习，我觉得媒体人应该是走在这个社会很前列的一群人，他们就是在不断的学习，不断地接受新的东西，不断地提高自己的眼光。"

22. Interview Participant: Doji (Group Professionals)

"It is crucial to see candidate's potentials, including the manners of thinking and observation, when we decided whether he/she could enter the next round of interviews. We understand that you do not have very much experience, but we just want to see if you have some new ideas or whether your logic of designing is clear. If you are perfect in the first two parts but bad in third one, you will not go on to the next recruiting round."

"要不要进入第二轮面试的一个最核心的一个，就是看这个人的潜力，看这个人的能力，看这个人的观察事情，想事情的角度的问题…我知道你没有经验…但是有的时候，他会有一些新的想法是你没有想到的，有的时候可能逻辑性很强。有的人可能逻辑性也没有，又很平平淡淡，那可能我对这个人一定兴趣也没有了。那你之前前两个环节再怎么好，这个环节也就留不下来。"

23. Interview Participant: Doji (Group Professionals)

"One may feel that it is easier for a department to cultivate undergrads. And undergrads are quicker to get into the work than higher degreed students."

"你会发现如果我要陪养他（研究生）的话，感觉没有培养一个本科生好培养。感觉他们（研究生）没有本科生快的融入到这个工作当中。"

24. Interview Participant: Hill (Group Professors)

"Students cannot just only focus on issues about the issues about media, and cannot stay boxed in to a narrow view. They should know that events that are presented in media are the things that are happening in their own society and globally. Students should have the consciousness to think about what is happening and why these things are happening. When you have this consciousness, you must learn knowledge in other field, other than media."

"不能让学生光盯着媒体，比如说你学传媒的，就光盯着传媒那点事儿。因为媒体那点事，那不能把目光就局限于那儿啊，你要知道媒体上呈现的是这个社会与世界正在发生的各类事情。应该关注那些东西，应该有意识的关注那些东西。为什么会发生。你只要有这个意识，你就一定会学到其他的专业知识。"

25. Interview Participant: Hill (Group Professors)

"After students received higher education, they should have the ability to judge, which is in accord with the phrase 'self-determined'".

"一个学生，你经过高等教育毕业之后，你要达到一个最理想的状态。是你能够看待这个世界的时候，能形成一套自己的判断标准。是非曲直，你有一个判断标准。我把这个取名为'个体自制'。"

26. Interview participant: Dada (Group Professionals)

"I reviewed my learning in university. Except for the English and Politics courses, I do not think any courses that related to media professionals helped me in my upcoming work. The reason is that I think the media curriculum is so broad. I think these courses do not have much of a practical effect. Media is not a theoretical discipline; it is a highly pragmatic one. It is an industry that changes very quickly. The things in the textbooks that you are using now may become obsolete in five years. Media is an industry in the forefront of the age. It keeps changing. And you should continually face the new environment."

"我回顾了一下本科学习的课程，除了英语课和政治哲学课以外，我没有觉得哪一个跟专业相关的课是真真的帮到我未来的工作当中。我觉得没有。因为我觉得都太泛泛了，而且没有什么实际作用。因为传媒本身就不是一个可以理论化的学科。他是一个强烈地高度实践，并且高度变化着的一个产业。你今年所用的课本，可能是五年前的实践所得出来的东西，但是传媒是一个风口浪尖上的行业，他需要不停地变化，你需要不停地去面对新的环境。"

27. Interview participant: Dada (Group Professionals)

"Our media education is outdated theoretical education, even though the department's educational goal is focused on practice and employment."

"我们在目标和口号上是就业为导向。但是我们的教育却是落后的理论性教育。"

28. Interview participant: Doji (Group Professionals)

"Our theory learning in media education is strong. And most of the universities, especially the good universities, emphasize theory learning. We should keep on doing that. The part we should improve upon in the future is practice in media education. We always say theory guides the practice. But instructors do not tell us *how* to use the theories to guide practice. This is a failure in teaching."

"我觉得理论上我们国家的理论知识也挺强的，其实我们大学教育一直都挺重视理论教育的。大多数学校，至少比较好的学校都是挺注重理论教育的。这一方面，我觉得保持就好，完全没有必要弱化。但需要加强的就是实践这方面的教育。因为我们总是在讲理论指导实践，但是我们基本上教育没有在教你怎么用理论指导实践。"

这句话每个老师都在说，但没有告诉你，怎么用这个理论指导你的实践。这个过程是完全欠缺的。"

29. Interview participant: Yi (Group Professionals)

"Our media education is vocation-oriented education. I hope there could be more academic guidance, which could improve critical thinking ability. Media is an industry that is full of social significance. It has strong social influence. It is not just about learning a skill."

"中国是一种以职业为导向的传媒教育。我希望他变成学术引导…是学要研究，讨论和思辨的。他（传媒）是一个有社会意义的事业，是一个有影响的，不仅仅只是一项技能。"